

ExperiencingPR

"... In many developing economies, business growth strategies remain undocumented, leadership visibility is often neglected..."

- Tolulope 'Tolucomms' Olorundero, Convener, Experiencing PR Conference

Leading with PR:
Transforming Challenges into
Opportunities for Growth



Strategic Public Relations
Approaches for Leadership
Transitions



C-Suite Influence:
Unlocking the Power
of Strategic PR



AI-Driven PR:
Transforming Communication
for Business Growth



PR for Results: Innovative Strategies for
Business and Leadership Transformation



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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the third edition of the Experiencing PR Magazine, a publication dedicated to advancing conversations around public relations and strategic communications across Africa and beyond. This magazine is more than just a collection of insights—it is a direct output of the Experiencing Public Relations Conference, capturing the depth of discussions, strategies, and innovations shaping our industry. This year, we are honoured to feature contributions from 27 experts across three countries, each offering valuable perspectives on the theme.



Tolulope 'Tolucomms' Olorundero

*Editor-in-Chief & Publisher,
Experiencing PR Magazine
Convener, Experiencing PR Conference
Founder, Public Relations Women
Foundation (Nigerian Women in PR)*

Why This Year's Theme Matters

This year's theme—PR for Results: Innovative Strategies for Business and Leadership Transformation—reflects a critical shift in how public relations is perceived and practiced, particularly in developing economies. Too often, PR is narrowly equated with media management. However, as a public relations consultant leading a B2B firm, I know firsthand that **strategy development is the foundation of any impactful PR engagement.**

In developed markets, executive branding is a well-established function within organizations, with dedicated teams focused on **executive communications as a tool for leadership visibility and business growth.** However, in many developing economies, **business growth strategies remain undocumented, leadership visibility is often neglected, and sustainability planning is rarely prioritized.** The result? Thriving companies struggle to institutionalize their success, limiting knowledge transfer and long-term impact.

At Experiencing PR 2025, we are addressing these challenges head-on with two new sessions:

- **The Author's Corner** – Encouraging business leaders and industry experts to document their insights and contribute to global knowledge-sharing.
- **The Leaders' Lounge** – A focused discussion on executive visibility as a driver of business growth and industry influence.

We are honoured to have **17 distinguished speakers**, including our keynote speaker, Dr. Jumoke Oduwale, Minister for Industry, Trade, and Investment, whose insights reinforce the vital role of Public Relations in shaping sustainable businesses and impactful leadership.

A New Identity for a Broader Vision

Many people first came to know our work through Nigerian Women in PR, the organisation that initially convened Experiencing PR. However, as the conference evolved, a recurring challenge emerged—some assumed it was an event solely for women or exclusively for PR professionals. In reality, **EPR is a business conference open to both men and women across all sectors of the economy.**

As we move on, we are fully embracing our expanded vision by emphasizing our legally registered name—the **Public Relations Women Foundation.** This transition allows us to:

- **Highlight the contributions of women to the PR industry** on a global scale, with specific focus on developing economies
- **Advocate for the increased adoption of PR and communications strategies** across public and private sectors
- **Promote the documentation of homegrown strategies** that define the PR industry in developing markets.

While Nigerian Women in PR remains a part of our journey, our work now extends far beyond it. Through this foundation, we are deepening our impact across Africa and other developing regions.

Looking Ahead: Three Pillars for the Future

As we refine our vision, we are structuring our work into three distinct pillars:

- **Community** – The Premium Members Club, fostering a network of female PR and communications leaders in developing economies.
- **Events** – Industry-defining gatherings like Experiencing PR, where ideas and best practices are exchanged.
- **Training** – Bespoke PR and communications programs co-developed and delivered with local and international partners.

Gratitude

This conference and magazine would not be possible without the dedication my small but incredibly dedicated team. We went through the highs and lows of planning this conference; with its delivery, I hope you now know that IMPOSSIBLE is a fallacy. If you can think it, now you know you have all it takes to achieve it.

To our first-ever Conference Planning Committee members, chaired by Dr Yetty Ogunnubi: thank you for coming on this journey with us. As I said when we started, this was an experiment for us and an opportunity to learn how to work with an expanded team to deliver a single vision. We appreciate your patience, time and dedication to this course. The countless hours you invested made EPR 2025 a success.

A special thank you to my **husband and children** for their unwavering support and understanding during these intense months of planning. Documenting my work is not just about industry impact—it is also about leaving a reference point for my children, ensuring they see the value of commitment, strategy, and excellence in everything we build.

As you explore this edition, I hope you find inspiration, actionable insights, and a renewed sense of purpose in the evolving PR landscape. Here's to a future where our voices, strategies, and innovations continue to shape industries and nations.

Experiencing PR 2025 Conference Speakers



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jumoke Oduwale

Honorable Minister,
Federal Ministry of Industry,
Trade and Investment (FMITI)



Israel Opayemi
MD/ Chief Strategist,
Chain Reactions Africa



Funke Bucknor-Obruthe
Founder and CEO,
The Zappaire Events Group



Victoria Uwadoka
Corporate Comms, Public Affairs
and Sustainability lead, Nestlé



Kanyi Mwangi
Comms Director,
East and West Africa, Mastercard



**Ginikanwa
Frank-Durugbor**
Heads of Comms, Brand and
Events, Lafarge Africa Plc.



Kate Midttun
Chair, Middle East Public
Relations Association (MEPRA)



Advita Patel
2025 President, CIPR (Chartered
Institute of Public Relations)



Gbenga Totoyi
HR Thought Leader



CEO CHAT

Paul Onwuanibe

Founder and Group CEO,
Landmark Group



Dr. Glory Edozien
Founder and President,
9to5Chick



Odion Aleobua
Chief Executive Officer,
Modion Communications



Nkechi Alade
Principal Business Consultant,
Elvardah Ltd.



Rosemary Otor
Account Director, PR and
Strategic Comms, APO Group



Chioma Nwachuku
Corporate Affairs Manager, JTI



Joy Ngwolo Udemezue
Chapter Lead,
The Comms Avenue, Anambra



Oluchi Ajala
Chief of Staff, Spacefinish



Isabella Adediji
Founder and Managing Director
of Yellow Tamarind



Dr. IKE NELIAKU Ph.D, fnipr, ficmc
President & Chairman of Council,
Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR)

Dr. Ike Neliaku is a resourceful professional and marketplace entrepreneur, with wealth of experience spanning over 30 years in development communication, information management, public administration, leadership and governance.

He holds both Ph.D. in Development Studies and Masters in Political Economy from the University of

Abuja, and Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Jos. He also earned a Certificate from London School of Economics.

Was appointed Senior Special Assistant (Administration) to the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2010 - 2015, served as Member, Governing Council, Federal University, Gusau, 2015–2016 and worked in the public service for

over 20 years, holding key positions in Federal Ministries and The Presidency at different times.

In the private sector, Dr Neliaku has worked as Director Programmes, Institute of Civil Society, Abuja; Founding Vice Chairman/CEO, abc Shelters Ltd (a property development company); Executive Vice Chairman, Rightangle PR; Executive Producer, Rightangle Productions; Convener, Issachar Centre for Research and Development; Member, Governing Board and Executive Secretary, Nigerian Prize for Leadership.

Travelled to over 45 countries as a member of various federal government delegations, participated in more than 55 technical missions on sustainable development, information and communication management, negotiations and diplomacy, cultural relations, public sector administration, infrastructure development, leadership and management development, gender empowerment, youth development, etc.

Dr. Neliaku, has been in public relations practice in the public and privates sectors for over 35 years. On 25th of August 2023, he was elected as the 15th President and Chairman of Council, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR); Fellow, African Public Relations Association (APRA), Fellow; Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators; Fellow, Institute of Management Consultants; Fellow, Institute of Entrepreneurs; and Life Member Society for International Development (SID), Italy.

He is also the author of '7 Conspiracies of Power', a 662-page authoritative exposé on Nigerian politics, politricks and politicians.

Keynote Address



DR JUMOKE ODUWOLE, MFR

Dr. Jumoke Oduwole MFR, is the Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Prior to her current role, she served as the Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, on the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) and Investment (OVP) from October 2023 to October 2024. Under the Buhari Administration, she served first as the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Industry, Trade, and Investment, and subsequently as the Special Adviser to the President on Ease of Doing Business from November 2015 to May 2023. Dr. Oduwole and her team at the PEBEC Secretariat successfully delivered over 200 verifiable reforms across various arms and levels of government.

During her time in public service, Dr Oduwole has worked on various specialized reform committees in the federal government such as AfCFTA implementation Committee and the Tax Policy Reform Committee, and played a key role in the conceptualization and establishment of the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations (NOTN). She Chaired the Technical Working Team on Legislative Imperatives for the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025.

Recognized as one of Nigeria's leading reformers, she was awarded the national honour of Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR) in May 2023 for her contributions to national development. In 2024, the Most Influential People of African Descent (MIPAD) awarded her a "Hall of Fame" honour for her decade-long work on Nigeria's business climate reforms.

A policy entrepreneur of some repute, she was appointed as a Senior fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Centre for Business and Government (M-RCBG), Harvard Kennedy School, and as a Governance Advisor to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Governance Lab in 2022, for her innovation in governance.

She previously served on the Board of Ecobank Nigeria, and she has worked in investment and corporate banking at FCMB and GTBank.

Since 2015, Dr Oduwole has been on loan to the Federal Government of Nigeria from the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, Nigeria, where she teaches and researches International Economic Law. Jumoke holds an LL.B from the University of Lagos, an LL.M from Cambridge University, UK and a JSM and JSD from Stanford Law School USA, and is called to the Nigerian Bar.

EXPERIENCING PR 2025 CONFERENCE AGENDA

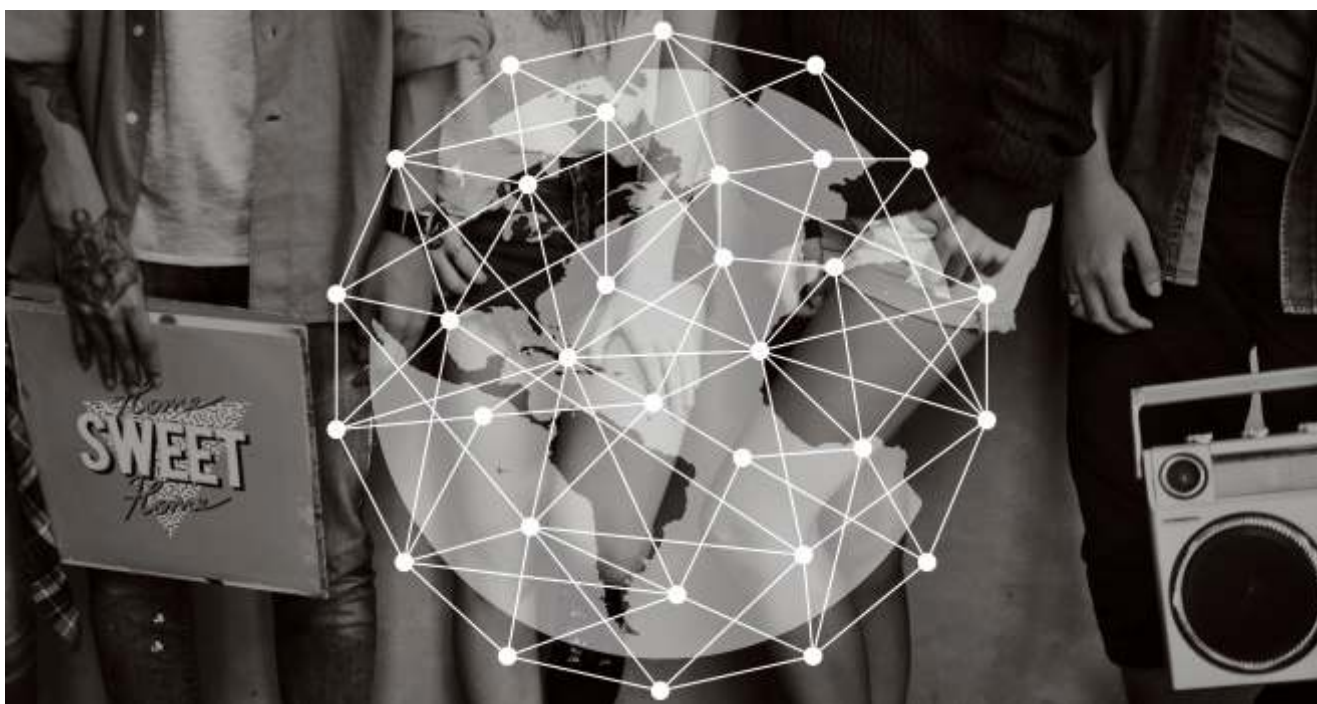
Registration & Networking	9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	
Introduction	10:00 a.m. - 10:05 a.m.	 Isabella Adediji Conference Host
National Anthem	10:05 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.	
Welcome Address	10:10 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	 Dr. Yetty Ogunnubi Chair, Conference Planning Committee, EPR 2025
Keynote Address - PR for Results: Innovative Strategies for Business and Leadership Transformation	10:20 - 10:50 a.m.	 Dr. Jumoke Oduwale, MFR Honorable Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI)
Founder's Address	11:00 - 11:10 a.m.	 Tolulope Olorundero Founder, Nigerian Women in PR & Convener, Experiencing PR Conference
EPR 2025 Magazine Launch	11:10 - 11:25 a.m.	 Yinka Adebayo, FRPA Group Executive Director, West & Central Africa, Omnicom Media Group
Special Address 1	11:25 - 11:30 a.m.	 Advita Patel 2025 CIPR(Chartered Institute of Public Relations) President
CEO Chat	11:35 - 12:05 a.m.	 Paul Onwuanibe Founder & Group CEO, Landmark Group  Nkechi Alade Principal business consultant, Elvada Limited
Advertisement	12:05 - 12:10 p.m.	
Special Address 2	12:10 - 12:20 p.m.	 Kate Midttun Chair, Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA)
Sponsors video	12:20 - 12:25 p.m.	
Networking Break	12:25 - 12:45 p.m.	
Industry Panel - PR Strategies to Win Quiet Wars in Business and Government  Panel Lead Speaker Israel Opayemi MD/Chief Strategist, Chain Reactions Africa	Panel Lead Speaker 12:50 - 1:00 p.m. Panel Discussion 1:00 - 1:40 p.m.	 Moderator Rosemary Otafor Account Director, PR & Strategic Comms, APO Group  Victoria Uwadoka Corporate Comms, Public Affairs & Sustainability Lead, Heale  Kanyi Mwangi Comms Director, East and West Africa, Mastercard  Ginikanwa Frank-Dugbor Head of Comms, Brand & Events at Lafarge Africa Plc
Leaders Lounge	1:45 - 2:20 p.m.	 Gbenga Totoyi HR Thought Leader  Dr. Glory Edozien Founder & President, 9to5Chick
Icebreaker - Exercise	2:20 - 2:30 p.m.	Exercise Lead Coach EMIKE DANIA
Authors' Corner  Moderator Chiomara Nwachuku Corporate Affairs Manager, JTI	2:35 - 2:55 p.m.	 Ayodun Akinfenwa Chief of Communications, The Bishops Church  David Akinfenwa Head of Corporate Comms and Public Relations, S&P  Adedoyin Jayesimi Co-founder, The Comms Partner
Mentorship Chat	3:00 - 3:30	Business Mentorship Chat  Funke Bucknor-Olorun President CEO, The Nigerian Businesswoman  Oluwa Ajala Chief of Staff, Queen's University Industry Mentorship Chat  Olayinka Akintola Chief Communications Officer, PwC  Joy Nwando Idemudia Chief of Staff, The Comms Partner, Waleye
Vote of Thanks	3:35 - 3:40 p.m.	 Ayomide Oyetunde Corporate Communications and Partnership Manager, NWPR
Photographs	3:40 - 4:00 p.m.	

Adopting Empathy-Driven Communication to Build Authentic Brand Connections

____ Blessing C. Emmanuel-Macaulay 

Bio:

Blessing Emmanuel-Macaulay is the founder and lead consultant at PR Fusions, a public relations agency focused on using strategic communications to create impactful narratives that drive business growth. With over a decade's experience in marketing communications, she has excelled in crafting innovative PR strategies, building brand identities, and fostering meaningful connections between organizations and their audiences. Her expertise spans media relations, crisis communication, and storytelling, helping businesses across industries achieve their goals. A passionate advocate for authentic and empathy-driven communication, Blessing is dedicated to empowering brands to tell their stories in ways that resonate deeply and inspire action.



Long gone are the days of flashy ads and robotic customer service scripts. Today's consumers crave more than just products and services – they want real connections and are looking for brands that “get them,” speak their language, and, most importantly, care. They want brands that understand their struggles, celebrate their wins, and speak to their hearts, not just their wallets. That's where empathy-driven communication comes in. It's not about selling; it's about connecting. This article dives into how brands can harness the power of empathy to forge authentic relationships, using real-life examples from Nigeria and across the globe.

Empathy, the ability to step into someone else's shoes, can be a brand's greatest asset. Imagine a brand that not only listens to customer concerns but genuinely understands and addresses them. That's the magic of empathy-driven communication. It transforms brand narratives from bland corporate talk to stories that spark connection. And guess what? Studies show that consumers are more likely to stay loyal to brands that reflect their values and make them feel heard.

By embracing empathy, brands can build credibility, navigate PR crises gracefully, and create meaningful engagement. In a world of endless advertising noise, an authentic, human-centric approach is what

truly stands out. So, how do brands move beyond buzzwords and weave empathy into their communication?

It starts with active listening – paying close attention to what customers are saying (and not saying) to craft messages that truly resonate. Have you ever had a conversation where someone was waiting their turn to talk? That's how customers feel when brands don't listen. Social listening tools and direct audience feedback help brands tap into consumer sentiment and craft messages that truly resonate. It's about moving beyond generic responses to personalised, meaningful engagement.



Once brands truly listen, the next step is to respond with stories that resonate – narratives that reflect real experiences, emotions, and values, turning passive audiences into engaged communities. Nothing tugs at the heartstrings like a good story. Brands that weave emotion into their narratives create powerful connections. Whether sharing customer success stories, behind-the-scenes struggles, or mission-driven campaigns, storytelling adds the human touch that audiences crave.

And for those stories to truly resonate, they must be rooted in honesty. Consumers can sense inauthenticity, and brands that openly acknowledge challenges, take responsibility and communicate with sincerity build trust and long-term credibility. Whether handling a PR crisis or simply engaging with customers, honesty goes a long way.

Building on trust and transparency, brands can connect deeply with customers by making them feel like more than just numbers—using AI-

driven insights and tailored interactions to craft personalised experiences that inspire loyalty and genuine engagement. A generic "Dear Valued Customer" email won't cut it anymore; today's consumers expect brands to recognise their unique preferences and needs, responding with thoughtful, customised interactions that make them feel truly seen and valued.

To illustrate the power of empathy in action, let's dive into some real-world stories where brands have truly embraced empathy, turning simple transactions into meaningful relationships. These brands aren't just talking the talk—they're walking the walk, forging genuine connections that go beyond the basics of business and into the realm of authentic human interaction.

From Nigeria to the global stage, brands are proving that empathy is more than just a buzzword – it's the secret ingredient to winning hearts and minds. For instance, MTN Nigeria has used the "Yello Care"

initiative over the years to show that they can offer financial and emotional support to their customers alongside telecom services. At the start of the year, MTN also launched the Go MAD (Make A Difference) campaign, rallying Nigerians to take strategic actions that inspire change and foster community development.

Meanwhile, on the global stage, brands like Nike turned empathy into a movement with its bold "Dream Crazy" campaign, standing for social justice and equality through its powerful partnership with Colin Kaepernick. And let's not forget Dove, whose "Real Beauty" campaign continues to redefine beauty standards by celebrating authentic, diverse women and empowering them to embrace their true selves. Whether it's offering relief, sparking a movement, or challenging norms, these brands prove that loyalty and love follow when you put people first.

Are you ready to turn empathy into your brand's superpower like these brands? Start by making it a core value. Build a culture that thrives on understanding, inclusivity, and genuine connections, both inside and out. Next, empower your teams, especially customer service and PR, to engage with authenticity at every touchpoint because empathy doesn't just happen; it's a skill that needs to be practised. Finally, don't just hope it's working; track your impact! Use sentiment analysis and engagement metrics to ensure empathy-driven efforts resonate with the right people. When empathy is at the heart of your strategy, the results will speak for themselves.

Empathy-driven communication isn't just a feel-good concept; it's a strategic advantage. Brands that listen, understand, and respond authentically will cultivate lasting loyalty and trust. In a world where customers are bombarded with choices, those who lead with empathy will stand out and thrive. Make the right choice today; choose empathy to build authentic and long-lasting brand connections.

The Power of Narrative: How Storytelling in PR Drives Leadership Transformation

— Chinwe Anwunobi 

Bio:

Chinwe Anwunobi is a strategic writer specialising in high-impact messaging for businesses in the public and private sectors. She delivers clear, insightful and value-driven communications solutions, helping businesses build messages and drive meaningful results.



Leadership used to be about decisions, strategies, and authority. In 2025, it is about inspiration, engagement, and an intense connection with the public, using one of the most powerful tools ever: Storytelling.

Storytelling builds trust.

It shapes the culture of a business, influences internal and external teams and when it is fully implemented in public relations, storytelling becomes the major driver in leadership transformation. In this article, we will discuss storytelling and its positive influence on leadership transformation and business leaders who want to make a long-term impact.

How Important is Storytelling in Leadership Transformation?

Storytelling is crucial to leadership transformation. Directing teams towards a unified objective and empowering them to action, is the essence of effective leadership.

Effective leaders know that to change how they lead, they must evolve from the authoritarian 'commandant' approach to the relational, emotional 'visionary' approach. Storytelling is the key facilitator in this evolution, bridging the gap between what a leader says and the emotional involvement of his team.

People have always connected with stories because they are the

widely accepted way to share knowledge, experiences, and emotions and communicate messages that speak to audiences on both rational and emotional levels. Leaders who utilize storytelling engage, not only the intellect but also the emotions of their audience, creating stronger connections. Stories make leaders humane. They make them relatable to their team and the public they serve. They are trust builders and make it easier for subordinates to follow their leadership.

To make these points clearer, we will take a look at the lives of the late South African President Dr. Nelson Mandela, and the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Nelson Mandela was imprisoned at Robben Island for twenty-seven years. Despite all that time in incarceration, his moral principles and ethics did not waver. This inspired millions of people all over the world to follow him.

Diana, Princess of Wales was the late ex-wife of the current King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who was killed in a car crash, in France in 1997. Her open and receptive approach to the poor, homeless, and underprivileged led to a change in the way the British Royal Family engaged with the UK public and across the Commonwealth.

Mandela and Diana built narratives that reeled people in, prompting them to imagine something greater and more meaningful for themselves and their future.

How Can Leaders Build Compelling Narratives for Business Transformation?

Through powerful storytelling. Leaders can use stories to communicate their vision, values, and unique selling points, bringing about organisational transformation. To achieve this, their narrative must include these key elements: Character – What kind of leader are they? Do they portray values that their audiences can relate to and aspire to?

Conflict – How do they react to conflict? Especially when their vision and resilience get tested.

Resolution – How do they resolve issues? How do they deploy their leadership qualities in conflict resolution?

Messages – What messages do they pass along to their teams and do the messages provide actionable insights and inspiration?

Building Leadership Narrative with Public Relations.

PR professionals are always completely involved in the process of building leadership narratives, especially in these four areas:

The Vision Narrative – This is storytelling that outlines the leader's long-term strategic goals and a clear direction for the future of the organisation.

The Value Narrative – This is storytelling that communicates a leader's principles and ethics, guiding his actions within and outside the organisation.

The Action Narrative – This is storytelling that shows the steps and processes a leader takes to achieve specific goals and objectives in his organisation.

The Teaching Narrative – This is storytelling a leader deploys in sharing insights, lessons, and experiences in a way that humanises him.

Case Study – Mo Abudu and The Ebony Life Group.

Mosunmola Abudu is a Nigerian media mogul and one of the most successful filmmakers in West Africa, who established Ebony Life TV a little over a decade ago. She is also the Executive Producer of 'Moments with Mo' which was the first syndicated daily talk show on African television. Mo tells stories that showcase the best of the Arts and Filmography in Africa, by giving Africa a voice on the global stage. Through strategic partnerships between Ebony Life Group, filmmakers across Hollywood, and streaming giants across the globe, she has been able to redefine and transform the media and entertainment landscape in West Africa, setting a clearer direction for the Nollywood Film industry to follow.

The Future of Leadership and Business Storytelling.

Storytelling is currently purpose, value, and impact-driven and will continue on that trajectory, for the foreseeable future.

Data will also be an important part of storytelling because it breaks down complex information, making it easier to understand and encouraging insight-based decisions.



Building Brand Advocacy from Within: Employee-Generated Content for Leadership Success — Esther Adeyanju

Bio:

As the Corporate Communications Lead at the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM)—the apex regulatory body for HR practice in Nigeria—I bring a strategic approach to storytelling, media engagement, and brand positioning. With expertise spanning PR strategy, digital marketing, content creation, and research, I have successfully driven visibility for brands across industries, including technology, finance, government, engineering, consumer goods, and telecommunications. At my core, I help brands own their narrative, build a strong reputation, and achieve their marketing goals. I am an Associate Member of both the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON).



Imagine this: A company spends millions crafting the perfect marketing campaign, but its employees - the very heartbeat of the organization - are silent: no excitement, personal endorsements, or organic buzz. Now, flip the script. What if those same employees became the brand's most passionate advocates, sharing their experiences, expertise, and enthusiasm? Which scenario sounds more powerful? In today's fast-paced digital world, where authenticity trumps **advertising, employee-generated content (EGC) is the secret weapon** for leadership success. It transforms employees from passive participants into active brand

storytellers, reinforcing trust, credibility, and engagement.

Why Employee-Generated Content Matters

People trust people. According to Edelman's Trust Barometer, content shared by employees gets **eight times more engagement** than content shared by official brand accounts. Why? Because audiences see employees as more relatable, credible, and authentic. And are actual people with faces and personalities.

Think about it: If an HR professional at **CIPM (Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria)**

shares a post about the impact of a conference session on their career growth, wouldn't that feel more personal and compelling than a generic corporate flyer? **Real stories, real impact.**

The Power of Employee Advocacy in Action

Consider how GTBank leveraged its employees to humanize its brand. Rather than relying solely on polished corporate ads, GTBank encouraged employees to share their workplace experiences on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. The result? Increased brand love, trust, and relatability - showcasing the bank not just as a financial institution

but as a people-first organization. Or take CIPM, where employees and HR professionals regularly share insights from events like the CIPM International Conference & Exhibition (ICE). When an attendee posts about how a keynote speech transformed their HR approach, it doesn't just market the event - it positions CIPM as a thought leader in people management.

Leadership's Role in Fostering Employee-Generated Content

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room." – Jeff Bezos.

Now, imagine your employees being the ones leading that

3. Create a Culture of Storytelling
At CIPM, for instance, what if every department had an "EGC Champion" responsible for sparking engaging conversations? A marketing team might share success stories, while HR showcases employee milestones. Structured yet spontaneous storytelling is the goal.

4. Make It Easy
Not everyone is a natural content creator. Provide ready-made templates, hashtags, or prompts that make it simple for employees to post without overthinking. As David Ogilvy once said,

about it: If a potential recruit sees multiple employees talking about their love for an organisation, wouldn't that be more convincing than a generic HR brochure? If clients witness genuine passion from employees, doesn't that build long-term trust?

Final Thought: Are You Ready to Build a Movement?

Employee-generated content is **not just a strategy; it is a movement** - one that leaders must actively champion. The question is, will you empower your employees to be the voice of your brand, or **will you leave that power untapped?**

The future of brand advocacy is **built from within**. The time to embrace it is now.



conversation. As a leader, how can you inspire and enable your team to become brand advocates?

- 1. Empower, Don't Control**
Gone are the days when brand messaging had to be rigid and top-down. Encourage employees to share their stories in their voices. Whether it's their career journey, a behind-the-scenes look at an event, or a simple LinkedIn post about company culture - let authenticity shine.
- 2. Recognise and Amplify**
Spot an employee's great post? Share it from the company's official page. Give shoutouts in town halls. Feature standout posts in newsletters. When employees feel valued, they'll naturally want to engage more.

'Give people the freedom to be creative but equip them with the tools to succeed.' I recall designing ready-made templates that empowered employees and HR professionals to share their conference experiences effortlessly. As a member of the publicity committee for the 56th International Conference and Exhibition - the largest HR event in Africa, this approach significantly boosted engagement and visibility.

The Ripple Effect of Employee Advocacy

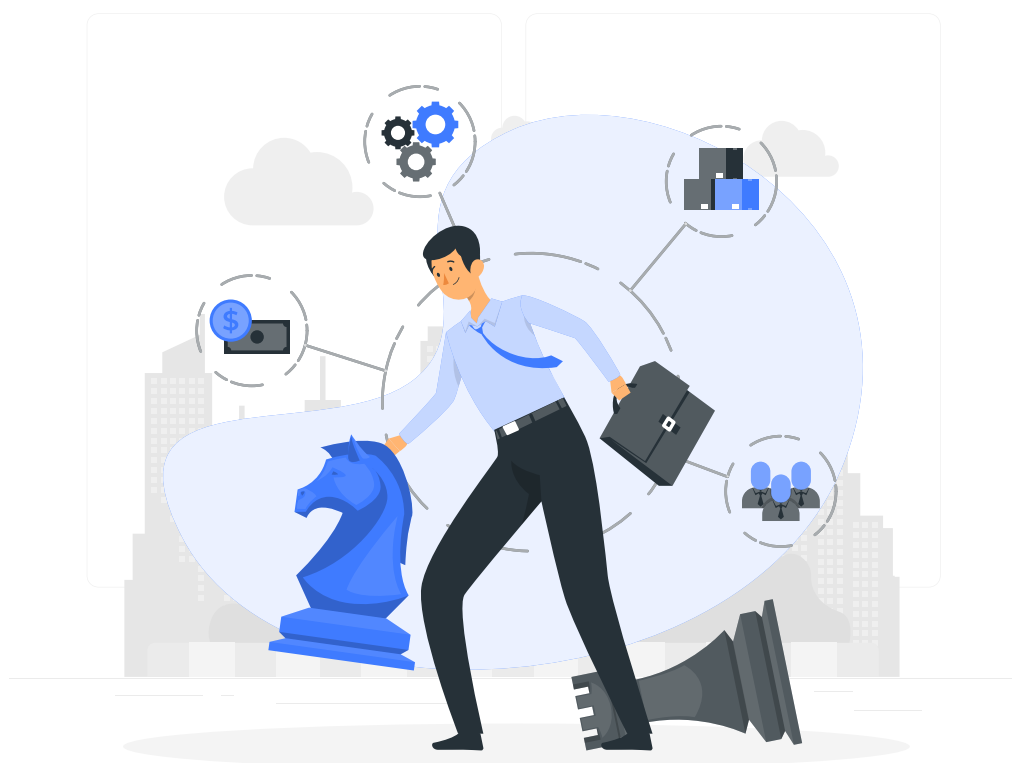
When employees become brand advocates, the benefits extend far beyond social media likes. Companies witness **higher engagement, better recruitment, stronger customer trust, and a magnetic brand presence**. Think

Building a Strong Personal Brand: Key Strategies for Leaders

— Esther Ifueko Chinedu 

Bio:

Esther Ifueko Chinedu is a Brand and Communication Expert with nearly a decade of experience across diverse industries. She holds local and international certifications and has trained over 800 professionals in brand strategy, digital marketing, and stakeholder engagement. As the founder of The Brand and Comms Circle, she equips brand strategists, content creators, and PR experts with the tools to build impactful brands. She currently leads Brand Communications and Stakeholder Management for the African Region at Fairtex Group.



In a world driven by digital connections, building a strong personal brand is no longer optional for leaders—it's essential. As a branding and social media consultant, I've seen firsthand how effective personal branding can elevate a leader's influence, foster trust, and open doors to new business opportunities. Public relations (PR), when strategically executed, can be a powerful tool in shaping a leader's image, driving business growth, and supporting leadership transformation. Let's explore strategies leaders can use to build a powerful personal brand that aligns with their vision and business goals.

The Power of Personal Branding for

Leaders

A personal brand isn't just about a logo or a catchy tagline; it's about how others perceive you. It reflects your values, expertise, and leadership style, influencing how people engage with you, both online and offline. In today's competitive business landscape, personal branding is key to distinguishing yourself and positioning yourself as a thought leader.

For leaders, a strong personal brand can:

- Attract talent and partnerships: Leaders with strong personal brands are more likely to attract top talent and form valuable business partnerships.

- Increase visibility and credibility: Consistent personal branding enhances visibility and builds credibility within your industry.
- Shape conversations: A strong brand allows leaders to influence public conversations, industry trends, and even policy discussions.

Public relations plays an essential role in crafting and maintaining a personal brand. PR is not just about managing media relations; it's about telling your story in a way that resonates with your audience and fosters trust.

Key Strategies for Building a Strong Personal Brand

1. Define Your Purpose and Values

The first step in building a strong personal brand is to define your purpose and values. Ask yourself:

- What do you stand for?
- What message do you want to convey?

Leaders with clear purpose and values are more authentic, and authenticity is vital for a strong personal brand. Ensure your personal brand reflects these values in everything you do. By being clear about who you are, you cultivate a brand that resonates with your audience and builds trust.

2. Leverage Social Media Platforms

Social media is an indispensable tool for building and promoting a personal brand. Platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube allow leaders to showcase their expertise and connect with their industry. These platforms are direct avenues to communicate ideas, engage with your audience, and build a community. To succeed on social media, consistency is key. Regularly posting content that aligns with your values—such as thought leadership articles, behind-the-scenes insights, and updates on your professional achievements, keeps your audience engaged. Engaging actively in conversations and offering support to others in your network strengthens your position as a leader.

3. Craft and Share Your Story

People connect with stories, not just facts and figures. As a leader, your journey, struggles, and successes shape your narrative. Sharing your story humanizes your brand and helps build emotional connections with your audience. Your story should reflect your leadership journey, the challenges you've overcome, and the lessons you've learned. Whether through written content, speaking engagements, or video interviews, storytelling helps build relatability and trust. It's about showing the human side of leadership and demonstrating how your values have influenced your professional decisions.

4. Align Your PR Strategy with Your Business Goals

An aligned PR strategy increases visibility, helps you gain media coverage, and positions you as an industry authority. Effective PR is about more than getting featured in magazines or on TV—it's about building relationships with key stakeholders, including journalists, influencers, and industry peers. Start by identifying platforms and outlets relevant to your industry and audience. Engage with the media, pitch your story, and offer expert commentary on trends in your field. Positive media exposure enhances credibility and helps establish you as a thought leader. PR also involves managing your reputation, handling crises gracefully, and maintaining brand consistency across all touchpoints.

5. Focus on Building Relationships and Networking

Networking is an often overlooked aspect of personal branding. Building and nurturing relationships is crucial for leaders who want to expand their influence. Whether attending industry events, collaborating with peers, or mentoring others, networking allows leaders to broaden their reach and build a loyal community around their brand. Effective networking isn't about exchanging business cards—it's about creating meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships. Your personal brand will thrive when others feel genuinely connected to you. The stronger your network, the more opportunities you'll have for business growth, partnerships, and professional development.

6. Maintain Consistency Across All Channels

Consistency is key when building a personal brand. Whether you're engaging on social media, speaking at events, or interacting with clients, it's important to maintain a consistent voice, image, and message. This helps build trust and reinforces your brand identity. Ensure that your brand is cohesive across all platforms—from your website and social media profiles to any content you create. Make sure your tone, messaging, and visuals align with the values and purpose you've established for your brand. A consistent presence across all channels

strengthens recognition and helps build a loyal following.

Conclusion

Building a strong personal brand requires more than just a polished image—it demands authenticity, consistency, and a clear alignment between your values and business goals. By leveraging PR and social media effectively, leaders can enhance their influence, foster business growth, and transform their leadership style. Personal branding isn't just about looking good—it's about being seen, heard, and respected in a way that propels both personal and business success. In the end, a well-crafted personal brand is one of the most powerful tools a leader can use to shape their career, influence their industry, and drive business growth. Through strategic PR and personal storytelling, leaders can build a brand that resonates, stands out, and creates lasting impact.



Role of PR in Leading Business Transformation

— Eniola Olagundoye 

Bio:

Eniola Olagundoye is currently in her final year studying Mass Communication at Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, where she is honing her skills in media and communication. She works as an Account Manager at PR Fusions, where she significantly contributes to providing value for clients. Eniola is highly passionate about Public Relations and is eager to expand her knowledge and expertise in the field. Beyond her professional role, Eniola also writes for the Love Central blog. This platform has allowed her to experience transformative personal growth, boosting her creativity and aiding in her self-discovery. Eniola is committed not just to her studies and career but also to personal development and creating a positive impact in her community. In her spare time, she enjoys watching Nollywood films. Her dedication to ongoing personal growth highlights her aspiration to evolve and make a positive difference in the world with the help of God.



A popular quote from Warren Buffett states, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." This quote highlights the role of reputation in business success. Imagine a business dedicated to supporting young creatives. This brand has been established for a long time, with a focus on nurturing innovative ideas and providing funding for startups. They have continued to provide funding and foster creativity, but over time, many of their targets began to view them as scams. As a result, the brand developed a reputation as a fraudster.

Instead of growing and nurturing more creatives, the business is now struggling as a result of its negative reputation. While the goal to nurture innovative ideas, and fund startups is essential, a strong public relations (PR) strategy is important for effectively positioning the business. PR does not just manage public perception, it plays a key role in business transformation

For businesses seeking transformation, reputation is crucial. A brand that lacks credibility cannot rely on the same strategies; it must reconsider how it communicates, engages with its audience, and rebuilds trust. This is where Public Relations (PR) becomes vital—not

merely as a tool for managing crises but as a catalyst for meaningful business change.

For a business focused on providing startup funds for young creatives, strategic planning is essential for growth. This includes a tailored approach that incorporates various methods, technologies, and tools to meet business objectives, enhance performance, and satisfy stakeholders. One of the most effective strategies for leading this transformation is Public Relations.

By leveraging PR strategies such as thought leadership, media relations, and event launches, businesses can reshape their public perception and reinforce trust. A real-world

example of PR-driven transformation is the case of Domino's Pizza.

Public relations (PR) plays a vital role in driving business transformation. A notable case study of PR-driven transformation is the rebranding of Domino's Pizza. In 2009, the company unveiled a strategy called "radical transparency." Before this, Domino's had been experiencing declines in same-store sales for three consecutive years, indicating that change was necessary. According to Russell Weiner, the CMO of Domino's Pizza, in an interview with Forbes, he stated, "What I did first was to let our president know that I felt like the brand positioning was wrong. Because the brand positioning was wrong, it was leading to advertising that wasn't driving sales. I felt like we needed to reposition the brand." Through effective brand repositioning—a key PR strategy—Domino's was able to employ transparency and authenticity to revitalize its brand. This approach helped to provide a more accurate perception of the company.

To leverage PR in driving business transformation, several important steps must be taken. First, PR goals should be aligned with overall business objectives. Hiring a PR expert, professional, or analyst can assist in this alignment, which will lead to the identification of the right

strategies to achieve these goals. Therefore, businesses seeking to promote transformation should engage highly skilled PR professionals to ensure their goals are well-aligned and that effective strategies are employed.

Another key consideration is the need to stay updated. As PR strategies evolve, professionals must remain aware of current trends to identify the most effective approaches for achieving business transformation and growth. Business leaders should also recognize that driving transformation through PR cannot be done in isolation; experienced professionals are needed to guide the organization through the journey of transformation.

Stakeholder engagement and reputation management are essential components of business transformation. Without the trust of customers, investors, and industry peers, transformation efforts may fail. Public relations (PR) offers strategies to promote transparent communication, enhance credibility, and cultivate lasting relationships with key stakeholders.

Businesses must understand that public relations (PR) is not merely a support function; it serves as a strategic driver of transformation. By aligning PR initiatives with long-term objectives, establishing SMART

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals, and staying updated on industry trends, organizations can effectively reposition themselves in the market.

Moreover, business leaders must recognize the role of PR in driving growth. PR strategies should align with business goals, and leaders should establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives for their PR efforts. Understanding the importance of aligning PR goals with overall business objectives will lead to the implementation of effective strategies for achieving these goals. It is also vital for leaders to appreciate the influence of PR and ensure they engage highly qualified PR practitioners to advise them on strategies related to transformation, reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and more. Businesses that understand and leverage PR strategically will thrive in an evolving marketplace



The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Leadership and Business PR

— Grace Okogwu 

Bio:

Grace Okogwu is a Strategic Corporate Communications Generalist, distinguished by her unique approach to work driven by LOVE (Leadership, Ownership, Value-Creation & Impact, Excellence & Continuous Learning). She has 4 years of support communications and 3 years of core communications experience in the energy, media production, tech, and supply chain sectors. Grace's passion is not just in communications but in the transformative power it holds for business growth. She is dedicated to shaping the right mindsets in individuals and driving business success through her work in communications and media. Currently, Grace is a Corporate Communications Analyst at TREXM Holdings, an Indigenous company that operates and builds businesses across the energy and industrial value chain.



Before stepping into a core communications role, I thought Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was just about the donations companies made to charities and the underprivileged. Even during my early years in communications, when I first encountered CSR, it seemed like one of those activities organisations did to feel good and show the world how "nice" they were. Of course, my limited understanding of this PR strategy was due to a lack of knowledge at the time, and that's a fair point. However, part of the blame for my previous narrow view of CSR can also be attributed to how this PR activity has often been approached. You'd agree that the

term "CSR" has faced criticism as a "lie" organisations tell to appear "proficient" on paper. At the same time, sometimes the public can easily spot misalignments between an organisation's reputation, values, and CSR efforts.

In today's business world, leadership isn't just about decision-making, Corporate Social Responsibility isn't about performing a random "goodwill" act, and the modern organisation isn't just focused on making a profit. Already, you can tell that the stakes are high: Modern business leaders and organisations are expected to be responsible, faithful stewards of their values, mission, and ethos. Everyone is

watching to see if organisations and leaders truly embody who they claim to be and what they stand for. This expectation should be at the centre of a PR or communications professional's mind when crafting communications strategies for their clients or organisations, including CSR.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a crucial component of business strategy, playing a key role in shaping public perception, improving reputation, and ensuring long-term sustainability. In this context, CSR isn't just a tool for goodwill; it's an essential aspect of leadership and public relations (PR) that can drive actual business results if executed properly.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

Generally, Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the actions and initiatives a business undertakes to manage its impact on society and the environment. However, this basic definition doesn't capture the depth of impactful and strategic CSR that can make a real difference.

I appreciate Investopedia's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public." Investopedia's definition highlights the proactive, ethical, and accountable approach organisations should adopt toward CSR.

Another definition I love comes from Harvard Business School Online, which defines CSR as the idea that businesses are responsible to the society surrounding them. Once again, we can highlight the key word here, "responsibility," which should shape the mindset with which organisations approach CSR initiatives. If I were to combine these three definitions, I would describe CSR as follows:

Corporate Social Responsibility involves strategies businesses use to demonstrate their responsibility to their communities, holding themselves accountable to the public, their stakeholders, and themselves.

Common CSR initiatives include reducing carbon footprints, supporting local charities, ensuring fair labour practices, and promoting diversity and inclusion in the organisation. However, we shouldn't limit ourselves to these examples of CSR; there are many more. As societal expectations evolve towards sustainability and ethical practices, CSR has become vital for enhancing a company's reputation. Businesses focusing on impactful CSR initiatives are increasingly recognised as industry leaders and responsible corporate citizens.

The Influence of CSR on Business Leadership

In 2025, leadership is more than guiding an organisation toward financial success. Modern leaders must inspire trust, motivate their teams, and build meaningful relationships with key stakeholders, including their customers, the communities in which they operate, and investors. A leader's credibility is often closely tied to their organisation's values and commitment to ethical practices, which must be protected at all costs.

Corporate Social Responsibility is ideal for leaders and organisations to align their values with their actions. Let's examine this example: Imagine an organisation claiming to be on a mission to close the financial literacy gap among young Africans. This is slapped across their owned, shared, and paid communication channels. They create videos, write engaging blog posts, and craft compelling website copies about how much they want every young African to become financially literate. Now, when it's time to draft an activity for their only CSR activity of the year, they decide to donate food items to an orphanage. While this is a kind and generous gesture, it doesn't directly align with the organisation's mission. A more fitting use of that CSR initiative is to launch extracurricular financial literacy classes for secondary, primary, and university students. We can see how the latter activity closely aligns with the organisation's mission and reinforces its mission by "showing and telling".

Businesses that engage in strategic CSR initiatives effectively communicate their long-term commitment to addressing global or local challenges, creating strong connections with external and internal stakeholders and their communities. Furthermore, CSR isn't just about what businesses say alone; it's about what they do and, in some cases, how they do it.

A business leader or organisation's ability to implement genuine CSR initiatives rather than simply

"greenwashing" or giving lip service to social causes determines the company's credibility. Authentic business values are essential when building trust, and impactful, strategic CSR is crucial in conveying this authenticity.

CSR as a PR Strategy for Business Transformation

I love this definition of PR. Public relations (PR) is the art and science of managing a company's reputation, fostering positive public perceptions, and building relationships with stakeholders. As discussed earlier, CSR has become an integral part of PR because it directly affects how the public perceives an organisation. A well-executed CSR strategy can yield numerous PR benefits, including enhancing brand reputation, increasing customer loyalty and trust, attracting and retaining top talent, and boosting investor confidence.

Where CSR Meets Leadership and PR: Building a High-Performing Strategy

For CSR to make a meaningful impact, it must be fully integrated into the overall business objectives and PR strategy. Any approach that treats CSR as a separate initiative or marketing tactic will fall short of generating the long-term impact that enhances an organisation's or leader's credibility. Therefore, CSR must align with the company's core values, mission, vision, and ethos and its leadership team.

Leaders must also ensure that CSR strategies are communicated effectively internally and externally. From an internal perspective, employees must feel involved in the process and know they're part of an organisation making a positive impact. From an external perspective, PR campaigns must articulate the tangible results of CSR initiatives, ensuring the company's actions speak louder and better than words.

Disrupting the Public Relations Industry for Business Transformation and Leadership Revolution

— Ijeoma Oseji 

Bio:

Ijeoma Chukwudumebi Oseji is a public relations professional with over 10 years of experience in the field. She has a proven track record of delivering excellent results in various aspects of public relations, such as media relations, press releases, feature articles, press briefings, interviews, crisis management, social media, and reputation management. She has worked with diverse clients across different sectors and industries, helping them to communicate effectively with their target audiences and stakeholders. She is passionate about public relations and strives to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethics in her work. Aside from being a PR professional, she is also an administrator and a Human Resource Manager. She currently works with Coates Brothers West Africa.



Disruption is a radical change to an existing industry or market due to technological innovation. It simply has to do with embracing new ideas and new ways of doing things. Put differently, it means a change in mindset. The main purpose of public relations is to maintain good relationships, goodwill, and a positive reputation between a brand and its target audience.

The public relations (PR) industry has long been the cornerstone of how businesses and leaders communicate with their target audiences. However, the traditional PR model primarily focused on using conventional communication

channels like carefully crafted press releases, and media kits, pitching stories to journalists, arranging interviews with company spokespersons, issuing statements to the press, and leveraging traditional media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television to manage an organization's public image. The traditional PR was widely seen as a one-way communication because it relied heavily on gatekeeping, that is, it controls the flow of information. Audiences were passive recipients of information and did not engage actively in questioning or even demand accountability. But just like no industry is immune to digital disruption, Public Relations is also

not immune to digital disruption. The entire PR landscape, including its definition, scope, approach, deliverables, and measurement, is disrupted to meet the trends of the time, and the world now operates differently from the initial status quo.

How Disruptive PR Has Created Business Transformation

In a world increasingly defined by rapid technological advancements, the Public Relations business has been transformed due to the employment of the following:

1. **Virtual Press Room:** With the introduction of technologies such as smartphones, tablets personal

computers, and the internet, traditional press kits and media relations processes are now digitized such that brands and companies now make use of virtual press rooms. These virtual newsrooms are online platforms where companies post their news and all the information they want journalists to find. Also known as a digital press room or newsroom, it attracts traditional journalists, podcasters, bloggers, and influencers who are curious about the business. Hence, newsroom essentials are usually placed in this hub such as PR contacts, social media links, company info, product and services info, press releases, fact sheets, spokespersons, pictures, videos, logos, executive bios, expert profiles, and recent media mentions. Storing these bits of information online has disrupted the ways PR firms work thus achieving PR results.

2. Artificial Intelligence (AI): In day-to-day responsibilities, AI technology has proven its capability to assist PR professionals in many repetition-based tasks such as drafting press releases, transcribing recorded interviews and speeches from audio to text, creating media lists, writing emails, producing reports, predicting media trends, interpreting online conversations, designing data-driven campaigns, and even predicting a crisis. It has also been helpful with media monitoring with an impressively high level of accuracy and efficiency that humans cannot compete with. It captures the amount of coverage the brand has received from the media and measures the positive, neutral, and negative sentiments towards the brand. Content generation has also been a lot easier with the introduction of AI. With the support of AI-powered platforms, PR professionals can assess relevant information promptly, which allows them to keep focused on other activities such as creative thinking and strategic planning, and this has helped enhance PR results.

3. Social Media Communications: Social media is the platform where you can interact with your audience, build relationships, and

amplify your reach. Social media provides a unique approach for PR professionals to observe and understand online behaviors which are crucial for shaping communication strategies and messages. Social media can be used to interact with the target audience, build relationships, and amplify the reach of a brand. Embracing digital communication has changed the communication landscape. Disruption in the PR industry has welcomed a new way to communicate. Every brand has a website/blog site, a Twitter handle, a LinkedIn page, an Instagram page, and even a Facebook page, amongst others. Through these platforms, brands communicate their offerings and keep stakeholders and target audiences updated with the latest news about the brand. Since smartphones, tablets, personal computers, and other gadgets are now integral parts of daily life, consumers visit social media very often, hence PR targets their audience via these social media handles. Social media consumers have also embraced new ways to communicate using emojis, GIFs, stickers, and hashtags. Also, monitoring social media and other digital interactions provides valuable data that offers insights that can enhance PR campaigns. This disruptive approach has been a lot helpful because it helps establish the online presence of brands,

keeps audiences abreast of updates and happenings around the brand, helps the brand get feedback for its products and services, and it is easy to monitor its followers and their behaviors towards the brand through likes, comments, reactions and engagements. It has greatly helped in increasing brand awareness, credibility, and trust, generating word-of-mouth and referrals. It has also helped to monitor and manage brands' reputations and to respond to feedback and crises. All of this has gone a long way to achieve PR results.

4. Influencer Marketing: Influencer marketing is the practice of collaborating with influential people in society, who have a large and loyal following on social media, and who can endorse a brand, product, or service. PR professionals now embrace influencer marketing as a disruptive approach to reaching their target audience. These influencers are usually celebrities in their chosen fields such as Actors/Actresses, TV/Radio presenters, prominent footballers, musicians, and skit makers, to mention but a few. The whole idea is that the influencer with a huge followership will naturally influence his or her followers to the brand he or she represents. Engaging these followers through online



competitions and likes, also helps the audience stay knowledgeable about the brand represented. This approach produces PR results because it is easy to measure its impact through the number of likes, comments, engagements, feedback, and followership. It also increases brand awareness, credibility, and trust, and generates word-of-mouth and referrals.

5. Virtual and Hybrid events: PR professionals have gradually embraced virtual and hybrid events as the new norms in the post-pandemic era. Such events include PR events such as Press conferences, webinars, product launches, workshops, book/journal launches, etc. These virtual events are usually held online using video conferencing platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, amongst others, and this allows participants to join in from anywhere. While virtual events are completely remote, hybrid events combine both online and offline elements, such as live streaming, interactive features, and physical venues. Both the virtual and hybrid events have so far helped PR pros to save costs, time, and resources, while also reducing environmental impacts, all to achieve PR results.

6. Content Marketing and Storytelling: Content marketing is the process of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and engaging content to attract and retain your audience, while storytelling is the art of using narratives, emotions, and visuals to convey messages and connect with your audience. PR professionals now make use of these approaches to achieve PR results. Aside from the usual press releases and feature articles, PR professionals make use of content marketing and storytelling to showcase their brand's personality, values, and stories. It has helped them to educate, entertain, and woo their audience. The common platforms used by PR pros to achieve this are platforms such as blogs, videos, YouTube channels, podcasts, social media, webinars, and e-books, and these have so far proven to achieve PR results by influencing public perception.

Expectations of PR Leaders in the Era of Disruptive PR for PR Results

PR leaders will have to embrace AI and learn as much as they can about how it will impact the industry. They will also be expected to upskill as AI evolves because there are speculations that AI will play a huge role in pitching write-ups about products and services, hence automation will decide what to publish soon. PR leaders will be expected to take advantage of the layoffs happening in the technology industry and search for the best talent for their PR agencies. These talents will help handle all online-related activities such as virtual/hybrid events, social media activities, content marketing, virtual press room maintenance, etc.

PR leaders will still be expected to build and nurture their relationships with media outlets and journalists. Despite the adoption of AI and other technologies, human interaction will still be required in business development. PR leaders should understand their clients' organizations and priorities, because this will help them ascertain the kind of digital communication that should be employed at the time, thus helping them stay proactive in offering solutions for growth.

PR leaders should employ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in content generation, thought leadership write-ups, and speeches during speaking engagements, to sell the brand, and reach the audience faster. Good PR can be a game-changer for a business that relies heavily upon a positive public perception to fuel its profitability and manage its crisis. PR leaders should therefore employ digital platforms for media monitoring, reactions to negative feedback, and general online reputation management. PR pros need to embrace social media and use it to its full potential because consumers are looking for connections, and social media will connect brands to these consumers.

PR leaders may need to introduce Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) during events to support their PR and marketing objectives.

For instance, in a product launch event, virtual showrooms, product demos, and walking through a virtual store can create an unforgettable experience and positive feeling about the products and services offered by the brand.

The Future of Disrupting PR

For too long, PR has been about going about maximum coverage, the future of PR will focus on the quality of coverage and the delivery of key messages. Similarly, PR has been measured by the volume of coverage, but the future of PR will shift to the quality of coverage and the effectiveness of key messaging, as new measurement methods are being developed to provide a more meticulous result of PR campaign success.

Conclusion

The world has come to embrace Disruptive Public Relations as a necessity. As the industry continues to evolve, the integration of new technologies and strategies will certainly shape the future of public relations, presenting exciting possibilities for creativity and effectiveness, hence PR businesses and leaders will have to embrace these changes for transparency, authenticity, adaptability, and responsiveness, which altogether cumulates in positive PR results.



From Visibility to Credibility: Using PR to Build a Strong Leadership Brand

— Khadija Shehu Bamalli 

Bio:

Khadija Shehu Bamalli is a versatile and strategic public relations and media personnel with 5 years of experience implementing internal and external communications strategies in the public service. An expert communicator, a graduate and diploma holder in English Language, an executive diploma holder in International Diplomacy & Protocols, with an MSc in Mass Communication (in view), renowned for turning communication challenges into opportunities. Khadija is passionate about the transformative power of communication and believes in driving meaningful change through effective communication.



Most people equate PR to attention. However, coverage, media mentions, and social media chatter are what most leaders and companies might be referring to. Attention is not the ultimate key. Great leadership has to be underpinned with **credibility**, trust, and respect, all key ingredients that will get people to listen to, follow, and believe in you.

Here are actionable steps to leverage PR, not for visibility, but to build real trust.

Step 1: Thought Leadership: Show, Don't Just Tell

People trust experts. If you want to be seen as a credible leader, you

need to **show what you know** and how it helps others. This is called **thought leadership**, which is, sharing valuable insights that prove your expertise.

Here is how to do it:

- Article writing and sharing: Don't just pitch your business, share what you know about the industry. Your LinkedIn posts, blog articles, and social media updates can teach something useful.

- Speaking at Events: Webinars, podcasts, and industry conferences are great ways to share one's knowledge.

- Engage in pertinent conversations:

Engage in discussing news related to your industry and share your two cents on leading trends and pressing issues.

Example: If you work in marketing, instead of making the statement "I am the best marketer around," write articles like "5 Simple Marketing Tricks That Work in 2025."

Step 2: Media Engagement: How to Get Featured the Right Way

Getting media coverage is powerful: when a trusted news outlet features you, it adds credibility. However, not all publicity is good publicity, and what you

want is **meaningful** media attention, not just random mentions.

Here is how to do it:

- Focus on value, not self-promotion: Journalists and editors are looking for useful stories, not advertisements. Offer insights, not just your company's success story.

- **Build relationships with reporters:** Connect with them through social media, comment on their work, and pitch relevant ideas.

- **Be available and responsive:** When a journalist contacts you, answer promptly and have something worthwhile to say.

Example: Instead of saying, "My startup is the best," if you are in the tech space, you can always pitch a story like, "How AI is Changing Customer Service: Insights from a Tech Founder."

Step 3: Authenticity: Be Real, Not Just Polished

People trust real people. In today's world, polished corporate talk doesn't work like it used to. People connect more with leaders who are honest, relatable, and **human**.

Here is how to do it:

- **Share real experiences:** Talk about your successes but also include your failures and lessons learned.

- **Give personality a showcase:** You do not have to be super formal. A pinch of humor, some storytelling, or something of personal interest can make quite some difference.

- **Interact with your readers:** Answer the comments, request opinions, or invite debate.

Example: You do not have to only publish well and fine-tuned success stories, but also lessons learned like "One Big Mistake I Made in Business and What I Learned from It."

Step 4: Crisis Management: Address Issues Honestly

Every leader and business will experience setbacks. This will include bad reviews, bad press, or public complaints. How you **react means**

much more than the mistake itself.

A well-managed crisis can even **boost** consumer trust in your brand.

Here is how to do it:

- **Take immediate action:** Don't let silence deafen. The quicker the honest response, the more responsible that looks.

- **Own up to mistakes:** If something went wrong, admit it and explain how you're fixing it.

- **Stay professional:** Never argue with critics. Respond with facts and a calm tone.

Example: A CEO facing a product issue can say, "We hear your concerns. Here's what happened, and here's how we're fixing it," instead of ignoring complaints or using power to shut people up.

Step 5: Consistency: Trust is Built Over Time

One viral moment won't make you a credible leader. Trust is built over time through **consistent** messaging, actions, and values.

Here is how to do it:

- Stick to your values: Don't change your message based on trends. Stay true to what you stand for.

Deliver promises, if you say you are going to do something, do it. Stay visible, continue posting relevant information, and communicate with your audience while you build your relationships.

Example: If you talk about sustainability, do not just post once about the subject. Keep posting updates about how your company is working towards reducing its carbon footprint regularly.

Visibility is Just the Beginning

PR is not about being noticed but about **building a reputation that people can trust**. Thought leadership, meaningful media engagement, authenticity, crisis management, and consistency all play a role. If you focus on these, you won't just be seen, you will be **respected, followed, and remembered**. And that is what truly makes a strong leadership brand.





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Leadership Credibility: How Public Relations (PR) Drives Perception and Organizational Success

— Lubabatu Abubakar 

Bio:

Lubabatu Abubakar is a communications and PR professional with over six years of experience helping local and international organizations with creative ideas and strategies to help them raise awareness about the issues they care about and communicate the real impact of their work. Lubabatu currently works with PR Fusions as a PR Account Manager.



Leadership credibility hinges upon strategic PR in today's interconnected world, where news and opinions travel fast. It is vital in shaping public perception, building trust, and securing lasting success for leaders and their organizations. Public perception of a leader directly influences an organization's success. Good publicity is beneficial, and when done right, PR can transform how people view a leader, enabling influence, trust, and greater buy-in for an organization's vision.

Ineffective public relations, however, damage this credibility in numerous ways. A misstep—a poorly crafted statement or an ill-conceived campaign—can quickly escalate into a PR crisis. With the

advent of social media, negative news spreads globally within minutes, giving leaders little time to react appropriately.

For instance, the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) introduced a currency redesign policy that led to widespread cash shortages, public frustration, and criticism. His failure to effectively manage the PR fallout resulted in a reputational crisis that damaged stakeholder confidence in Nigeria's financial system. Beyond reputational damage, ineffective PR can erode employee morale, weaken stakeholder relationships, and diminish public confidence in an organization's mission and values. Leaders who neglect transparent

and strategic communication risk alienating their audiences and creating long-term challenges for their organizations.

Building and maintaining leadership credibility requires a proactive and strategic public relations approach. Here are key strategies that leaders can leverage:

- **Authenticity and Transparency**

People value leaders who are genuine and transparent. Authentic communication builds trust by demonstrating honesty and approachability. Transparency, particularly during challenging times, reassures stakeholders that leaders are committed to addressing issues openly and responsibly.

- **Consistent Messaging**

Consistency in messaging reinforces credibility. Leaders must ensure their communications align with the organization's values and mission. Contradictory statements or actions create confusion and erode trust.

- **Proactive Crisis Management**

A well-prepared crisis management plan is essential for mitigating potential PR disasters. Leaders should work closely with PR teams to anticipate risks, develop response strategies, and communicate effectively during crises. Prompt and empathetic responses often prevent further escalation and restore confidence.

- **Use Storytelling**

Storytelling is a powerful tool for building emotional connections with people. Leaders can humanize their brand and inspire trust by sharing narratives that highlight their values, vision, and achievements.

- **Listening and Engagement**

Effective communication is a two-way street. Leaders who actively listen to their stakeholders and

engage meaningfully demonstrate respect and commitment to their audience's needs. Social media platforms provide an excellent opportunity for real-time engagement and feedback.

• Thought Leadership as a PR Strategy

Establishing thought leadership enhances credibility by positioning leaders as industry experts. Leaders can leverage op-eds, white papers, and media contributions to demonstrate expertise and authority. Speaking at high-profile conferences or participating in industry panels fosters trust and enhances visibility.

• Employee Advocacy as a Credibility Booster

Employees serve as brand ambassadors—when they share positive experiences, it reinforces leadership credibility. Encouraging employees to engage on LinkedIn or participate in PR initiatives

creates authentic brand storytelling. A transparent internal communication strategy ensures alignment between leadership messaging and company culture.

• Crisis PR: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

A proactive PR strategy means anticipating potential crises and preparing a response framework. Instead of just reacting, leaders can use crises to demonstrate accountability and reaffirm values. Strategic media engagement and direct communication with stakeholders can help regain trust faster.

• **Leveraging Data for Credibility**
PR efforts should be data-driven to showcase measurable impact. Using statistics, case studies, or consumer insights strengthens a leader's narrative. Transparency in sharing reports (e.g., annual reports, diversity reports) improves trust with the public.

• Multi-platform Presence and Digital Storytelling

Leaders should embrace multiple PR channels, from traditional media to social media and podcasts. A well-curated LinkedIn presence is crucial for modern leadership credibility. Visual storytelling (e.g., short-form videos and infographics) increases engagement and humanizes leadership.

Leaders who prioritize strategic PR initiatives are better positioned to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve long-term success. The risks of ineffective PR—from reputational damage to eroded trust—underscore the importance of strategic and authentic communication. By understanding these dynamics and implementing best practices, leaders can build trust, inspire confidence, and achieve lasting success in an increasingly interconnected and transparent world.



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Public Relations (PR) Strategies for Sustainable Development and Business Transformation in Nigeria — Dr. Nonye Ezeaka

Bio:

Dr. Nonye Benedeth Ezeaka is an experienced, passionate educator and researcher in the field of Mass Communication. She is the Acting Head of the Department of Mass Communication at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, where she has dedicated her time to developing and leading the department's strategic initiatives. Dr. Ezeaka holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Mass Communication and has published several papers and books on the subject. Her research interests include Development Communication, Media Studies, and Public Relations. She is the current coordinator of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) Nigeria, Anambra chapter. Her membership in other professional associations, including NIPR, ACSN, and AMCRON, further solidifies her status as a prominent figure in the field of Mass Communication. Her personal life is equally fulfilling as she is happily married with children.



In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, Public Relations (PR) has become an indispensable tool for driving business success, particularly in emerging economies like Nigeria (Ojo, 2019). With a rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape and increasing global competition, Nigerian businesses must adapt quickly to both local and international changes (Akinwale, 2021). PR strategies not only contribute to enhancing organizational reputation but also play a crucial role in driving transformation, influencing leadership decisions, and fostering organizational change (Smith & Brown, 2020).

As sustainability becomes a critical global focus, businesses must integrate sustainable practices into their operations. In Nigeria, PR can be a vital tool in helping organizations align with national and international development goals while navigating the complexities of the local market (Ifeoma & Hassan, 2022). This article explores how PR strategies such as strategic communication, digital PR, and stakeholder engagement can contribute to sustainable business development and transformation. By examining how these approaches can drive long-term growth and build trust, this paper highlights the potential of PR to influence business outcomes and

create a more sustainable future for Nigerian companies.

The Role of PR in Business Transformation

Business transformation refers to a strategic and comprehensive shift in an organization's structure, operations, or culture aimed at improving its overall performance and adapting to emerging challenges. This process typically involves reassessing business models, reengineering processes, and leveraging new technologies or strategies to enhance efficiency and competitiveness. Transformation can also encompass leadership changes, shifts in organizational values, and adopting new market

approaches to align with evolving consumer demands and industry trends (Kotter, 1996).

In Nigeria, business transformation is crucial due to the country's rapidly evolving economic and socio-political environment. Companies must navigate challenges such as fluctuating market conditions, political instability, and the need for technological innovation. Furthermore, as globalization accelerates, Nigerian businesses are under increasing pressure to remain competitive and to align with international business practices. Transformation in this context is not just about scaling operations but ensuring sustainability, improving governance, and maintaining corporate credibility in a fast-changing environment (Akinwale, 2021).

How PR Drives Business Transformation

Enhancing Reputation

One of the primary ways PR contributes to business transformation is through reputation management. Public relations efforts can improve an organization's public image, creating a positive perception among customers, investors, and employees. A strong reputation fosters trust, which is essential for organizational success, especially when transforming. Effective PR strategies ensure that stakeholders understand the company's new vision, values, and objectives, reinforcing the transformation message (Smith & Brown, 2020).

Shaping Perceptions

PR plays a critical role in shaping public perception by crafting the narrative around a company's transformation journey. Through strategic communication, PR professionals can highlight key changes, such as product innovations or improvements in customer service that demonstrate the company's commitment to growth and responsibility. This helps businesses move away from past challenges, promoting a forward-thinking, progressive image (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). In Nigeria's competitive markets,

public perception can be the differentiator between success and failure.

Fostering Effective Leadership

Transformational leadership is essential during periods of change, and PR is integral to fostering such leadership. PR professionals help articulate a company's new leadership vision, ensuring that leaders are perceived as credible, competent, and committed to driving positive change. Communicating a clear vision and values strengthens organizational cohesion and guides leaders through the challenges of transformation. Leadership communication is crucial for building confidence internally and externally, especially during difficult transitions (Kotter, 1996).

Communication of Change

A successful business transformation requires clear communication of change to all stakeholders. PR plays a central role in managing this process by ensuring that messages about the transformation are transparent, consistent, and well-targeted. Whether through press releases, media interviews, or social media engagement, PR helps mitigate resistance by explaining the benefits of change and aligning stakeholders with the company's goals (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). This communication is vital for gaining stakeholder support and for reducing uncertainty during times of transition.

Innovative PR Strategies for Sustainable Development

Strategic Communication

Crafting the right message is vital for fostering sustainable practices within organizations. Strategic communication helps companies articulate their commitment to sustainability, align their messaging with global development goals, and engage with various stakeholders effectively. By carefully planning communication initiatives, businesses can highlight their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) efforts, ensuring these messages resonate with both local and global audiences. For

example, Nigerian companies in the oil and gas industry can leverage strategic communication to highlight their efforts in reducing carbon emissions or supporting renewable energy initiatives, thus reinforcing their sustainability credentials and fostering long-term loyalty (Smith & Brown, 2020).

Digital PR

Digital PR has become an essential tool for promoting sustainability, particularly through social media and digital platforms. These platforms offer companies the ability to reach a wide audience quickly and engage in real-time conversations. By sharing content that showcases sustainable practices, companies can build stronger relationships with eco-conscious consumers and investors (Ezeaka, 2024). In Nigeria, brands like Jumia and Konga have used digital PR to promote sustainable initiatives such as eco-friendly packaging and the use of green technology in their logistics operations.

Stakeholder Engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement is a key driver of long-term change in sustainability practices. Businesses that actively involve their stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the local community, can better align their sustainability efforts with the needs and expectations of these groups. In Nigeria, companies like Dangote Group and Nestlé Nigeria have successfully engaged stakeholders



in their sustainability initiatives by creating platforms for dialogue and collaboration. For instance, Dangote's commitment to sustainable agriculture involves working closely with local farmers and communities to promote sustainable farming practices, which not only benefit the environment but also support local economies.

Challenges in Implementing PR

Strategies in Nigeria
PR professionals in Nigeria face several challenges when implementing strategies aimed at driving transformation and sustainability. Political instability and frequent policy shifts can create an uncertain environment, making it difficult for businesses to develop long-term, consistent messaging. Additionally, the Nigerian economy has faced significant crises, such as

inflation and currency devaluation, which affect business operations and reduce budgets for communication efforts. Limited resources, both financial and human, also pose obstacles to executing comprehensive PR campaigns. To overcome these challenges, businesses must adapt by being agile in their communication, focusing on cost-effective digital platforms, and building strong relationships with key stakeholders to ensure continuous support for sustainability initiatives (Akinwale, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Public Relations plays a crucial role in driving sustainable business transformation in Nigeria. By utilizing innovative strategies like strategic communication, digital PR, and stakeholder engagement, businesses can foster long-term

growth and align with global sustainability goals. PR not only enhances reputation but also builds trust and transparency, which are key to successful transformation.

To better integrate sustainability and transformation into their strategies, PR professionals should focus on crafting clear, consistent messages that highlight both short-term achievements and long-term sustainability goals. They should leverage digital PR tools to engage with a wider, more diverse audience and continuously collaborate with stakeholders to drive change. Nigerian businesses must adopt innovative PR approaches to build resilience, maintain competitive advantage, and contribute to the nation's development goals.



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The New African Tech PR Playbook: Leading Communications in an Era of Digital Transformation

— Oluwatobi Rasaq Alaka 

Bio:

Oluwatobi Rasaq Alaka is a seasoned marketing communications professional with over a decade of experience in internal and external brand communications, content strategy, business development, and client relations. She holds a Master's degree in Marketing from the University of Lagos, a Postgraduate Diploma from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), and a Bachelor's in Mass Communication from Olabisi Onabanjo University. As the Corporate Communications Manager at Zone, Africa's first regulated blockchain payment network, Tobi leads strategic communication initiatives that drive brand engagement and corporate storytelling. She is also the founder of EmpowHer, a community dedicated to equipping young female graduates with the soft skills necessary to excel in their careers and businesses. A passionate advocate for the power of storytelling in business, she has collaborated with multiple business incubators to train startup founders on leveraging brand narratives for authenticity and growth. Tobi is committed to shaping impactful conversations at the intersection of marketing, technology, and corporate communications



Over the past decade, Africa has emerged as a key player in the global tech ecosystem. African talent, particularly software developers, are increasingly sought after worldwide. With the continent's rapidly growing population—and expectation to contribute about 28% to the world's population by the year 2050—Africa is fast becoming a hub of innovation. The dynamic youth, driven by unique challenges, are developing solutions across sectors such as Fintech, Agritech, HealthTech, and Entertainment. Startups like Paystack, Flutterwave, Zone Payment Network, and MoniePoint are examples of how African talent is making a mark globally.

The Role of Public Relations in Shaping Narratives

Public relations (PR) play a critical role in shaping how Africa's tech ecosystem is perceived globally. It involves telling stories that connect with audiences and builds trust with stakeholders. In Africa, where the tech ecosystem still depends on global funding, PR has evolved from managing reputations to amplifying the voices of innovators. With the slowdown in global venture capital activity, PR helps African startups stay visible and relevant. It allows companies to tell compelling stories about their achievements and unique value propositions, reassuring investors and customers while maintaining stakeholder

confidence. Transparent communication is especially crucial in difficult times. By regularly sharing updates and highlighting success stories, PR can help African startups build trust, attract funding, and prepare for long-term success when the market recovers.

Tackling Challenges in Africa's Tech PR Landscape

PR in Africa comes with challenges unique to the continent. With over 50 countries, each with distinct cultures, languages, and consumer behaviors, crafting one-size-fits-all messages is difficult. Additionally, unreliable internet, power outages, and underdeveloped infrastructure

limit access to some demographics. Despite these obstacles, Africa's potential offers ample opportunities for innovation. The growing youth population and increased smartphone penetration open doors for new communication strategies. By embracing a digital-first approach and localized storytelling, PR professionals can engage diverse audiences and create deeper connections. Global interest in Africa's tech ecosystem offers local startups the chance to position themselves as thought leaders and attract international media coverage and partnerships.

A New PR Playbook for African Tech Resilience

As the tech landscape evolves, so must PR strategies. The new playbook for African tech should focus on understanding the continent's diversity and tailoring communication strategies to specific regions. Market research is key to identifying cultural nuances, language preferences, and local needs. PR strategies should leverage digital platforms like social media, WhatsApp, and local content hubs to meet audiences where they are most active. Building trust in fragmented markets requires transparency and consistent delivery of value-driven messages. By using data and analytics, companies can refine campaigns and measure the impact of their PR efforts. This approach will help African tech companies craft narratives that resonate locally and globally, strengthening their position as innovation leaders.

Examples of Successful Tech PR in Africa

- **M-Pesa:** Safaricom's M-Pesa campaign focused on real-life stories of individuals empowered by mobile money, such as small business owners and farmers. The campaign humanized the technology, positioning M-Pesa as a tool for societal impact and driving its widespread adoption.
- **Andela:** Andela's PR strategy positioned the company as a talent accelerator, highlighting the global potential of African developers. By showcasing

success stories of developers working with top companies, Andela's campaigns reinforced the idea of African tech talent as world-class.

- **Zone:** Zone Payment Network has strategically leveraged Public Relations to establish itself as a thought leader and one of Nigeria's fastest-growing payment infrastructure companies. Through targeted media engagements, insightful thought leadership articles, and active participation in industry events, Zone has consistently highlighted its innovative solutions and commitment to advancing frictionless and regulatory compliant payment solutions

Future Trends in African Tech PR

The future of African tech PR will be shaped by the growing influence of AI and automation. These technologies will enhance insights, improve personalized messaging, and streamline media monitoring. Immersive technologies, such as the metaverse, will also provide opportunities for unique brand storytelling, allowing companies to engage audiences in innovative ways.

As the African tech ecosystem expands, we can expect more collaborations between local and international players, driving innovation across the continent. These partnerships will help African tech companies amplify their stories and increase their global influence, strengthening their position in the digital space.

Conclusion

As Africa's tech ecosystem grows, the strategies for communicating its relevance must evolve. With a young, digitally connected population and vast untapped potential, African startups are well-positioned to use PR to overcome challenges and showcase their innovation on the global stage. The new PR playbook for African tech focuses on localized, transparent, and data-driven storytelling. By leveraging technologies like AI, immersive experiences, and international collaborations, African tech companies can redefine their narratives, establish themselves as global leaders, and ensure long-term resilience.



Strategic Public Relations Approaches for Leadership Transitions

— Praise Idowu



Bio:

Praise has a background in strategic communications and public relations. In her professional journey, she has successfully worked in digital media, advocacy, and event management. She actively volunteers with non-governmental organizations supporting SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Communications and Technology at the University of Alberta.



Imagine the uncertainty felt by employees, investors, and customers when a beloved Chief Executive Officer (CEO) unexpectedly steps down, or when a merger places an unfamiliar leadership team at the helm of a well-established company. Change, as inevitable as it is, sometimes arrives unannounced, making organizations and their stakeholders scrambling to adapt. Leadership transitions, if as a result of planned successions, acquisitions, unforeseen crises, or executive resignations are key moments that define the trajectory of businesses.

Given the nature of leadership, a new senior leader's action or inaction will significantly influence

the course of the business, for better or worse. According to McKinsey research, if the transition succeeds, the leader's company will probably be successful. 9 out of 10 teams whose leader had a successful transition go on to meet their 3-year performance goals. Moreover, these transitions often provoke resistance and anxiety. In fact, according to Oak Engage, 41% of employees cite mistrust in the organization as a primary obstacle to embracing change, (39%) see a lack of awareness around the reason for change, and (38%) state fear of the unknown.

During such pivotal periods, public relations becomes indispensable, because the absence of clear

communication can create an information vacuum, leaving even the most loyal employees to fill it with speculation. This speculation can snowball into mistrust, weakened morale, and declining productivity, all of which directly affect organizational performance and the bottom line.

Case Study: Marissa Mayer's Leadership Transition at Yahoo

In July 2012, Marissa Mayer was appointed CEO of Yahoo, tasked with reviving a company that had been plagued by years of declining relevance and internal instability. Her appointment came with the expectation of bold leadership and transformational change. Less than a year into her tenure, Mayer made a significant decision to end the company's long-standing work-from-home policy.

Mayer's vision was rooted in fostering a stronger, more connected company culture, believing that face-to-face collaboration would drive the innovation Yahoo needed to regain its competitive edge. However, the execution of this policy highlighted significant shortcomings in Yahoo's communication strategy. The announcement came through a memo sent by Jackie Reses, Yahoo's Head of Human Resources, stating: "Communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side." This blanket directive gave employees little explanation of how the change aligned with Yahoo's broader goals or why it was necessary, especially for a company that has been on a remote mode of work for a while.

The memo, which was leaked to the media, quickly became a source of

public controversy. For a leader still solidifying her credibility, the decision was poorly received both internally and externally. Employees, blindsided by the abrupt announcement, felt alienated by the lack of engagement and consultation. Externally, critics framed the policy as a regressive move, dismissing it as a rejection of workplace flexibility. The media fueled the backlash, with debates erupting nationwide about modern work environments, women in leadership, and Yahoo's ability to innovate.

Yahoo's Global Public Relations Director, Anne Espiritu, initially declined to comment, responding to inquiries with the statement: "We don't comment on rumors, speculation, or internal matters." This passive response failed to address the growing concerns and left the company unable to control the narrative. As negative public sentiment escalated, Yahoo's already fragile reputation suffered further damage, undermining Mayer's attempts to position herself as a transformative leader in her new position.

This situation illustrates a critical misstep: the absence of strategic public relations during a pivotal leadership transition. A proactive public relations approach could have framed the decision as part of Mayer's broader vision for transformation, fostering understanding and support among employees and external stakeholders. Open dialogue with employees, transparent messaging, and proactive media engagement could have mitigated backlash and reinforced Mayer's credibility. Instead, the lack of effective communication turned an opportunity for cultural renewal into a crisis of trust and perception.

The key takeaway is clear. During leadership transitions (including in the early stages of a leader's tenure), public relations should actively align internal and external audiences with the leader's vision. Decisions, even those rooted in positive intentions, require clear, empathetic communication to succeed. Without it, initiatives meant to drive transformation risk

being perceived as disconnected, regressive, or poorly thought out, hindering both leadership and business outcomes.

The Role of Public Relations During Leadership Transitions to Drive Business Transformation

Public relations is not merely about facilitating communication, it also drives transformation, which in this context refers to measurable changes that improve an organization's alignment with its goals, enhance productivity, and foster innovation while maintaining its core values.

One of the biggest difficulties in leadership transitions lies in balancing continuity with necessary changes. Employees may experience alienation by shifts in direction, fearing that these changes threaten established norms or values. New leadership faces scrutiny from external stakeholders like investors and customers who want to know if they can deliver on the company's promises. Here, public relations performs an essential function in reconciling these tensions by promoting trust, transparency, and a shared understanding of the organization's evolving direction.

Building on this, employees need to perceive themselves as integral to the process, not merely passive participants of it. Public relations efforts can focus on aligning the new leadership's goals with employees' roles, showing how the changes will benefit not just the company but the individuals who contribute to its success. This requires creating open channels of communication, where employees can provide feedback and express concerns, fostering collaboration and shared purpose. Holding regular updates along with town halls or setting up employee forums helps to communicate processes clearly which reduces uncertainty and builds employee confidence. Moreover, public relations professionals can manage interactions between leadership and employees, to show that the organization values its people and their contributions. Public relations maintains organizational stability and encourages collective buy-in

through structured feedback systems and consistent communication efforts together with internal campaigns that highlight company vision.

The role of public relations is also outward-facing during transitions. External stakeholders, including media, investors, and customers, must be reassured of the organization's stability and direction. Public relations ensures these groups understand how the leadership change aligns with the company's broader mission and market strategy, safeguarding the brand's reputation and positioning it for growth.

The strategic application of public relations during leadership transitions is essential for any organization willing to transform its operations and reinforce its position in an increasingly competitive space. Without this, change can risk being viewed as a disruption rather than a path to progress.



Innovative Public Relations Strategies for Leadership Transition

1. Leveraging brand unique selling proposition (USP) during leadership transitions

Leadership transitions provide a rare and strategic opportunity to emphasize your organization's unique selling proposition (USP). As the spotlight naturally shifts to the changing leadership, the brand can seize this moment to reinforce its market position and build stakeholder confidence.

One approach is to show what sets the organization apart by connecting past accomplishments to future potential. For example, in an open letter to stakeholders, Starbucks' CEO, Brian Niccol

emphasized the company's commitment to delivering premium coffee experiences while reasserting its role as a community hub. By focusing on tangible aspects like coffee quality, sustainable sourcing, and store experience, the letter underscored Starbucks' core strengths without veering into abstract promises.
<https://about.starbucks.com/press/2024/back-to-starbucks/>

This approach not only reminds stakeholders why the brand is distinctive but also ensures that the leadership transition becomes a reaffirmation of its enduring value rather than a point of uncertainty. A well-crafted message focusing on the brand USP keeps the narrative anchored in what matters most, what makes the organization irreplaceable in the eyes of its audience.

2. Reflecting Stability and Legacy

Strategic communication deserves a permanent seat at the executive table, where it can guide organizations through pivotal moments such as leadership transitions. When public relations operates at this level, narratives are then aligned with organizational priorities, and key stakeholders are engaged effectively.

At this period, one critical contribution of public relations in the C-suite is advising on the importance of intellectual capital during transitions to safeguard continuity and drive momentum. This is because poorly managed executive changes not only disrupt internal stability but also erode market confidence, often due to the loss of institutional knowledge. According to Harvard Business Review analysis, sudden CEO and C-suite departures can wipe out close to \$1 trillion in market value annually, with much of the impact stemming from gaps in intellectual capital.

Significantly, a well-executed communications plan must reflect this focus on intellectual capital by demonstrating the seamless transfer of knowledge and continuity between the outgoing and incoming leaders. How has your outgoing CEO offered valuable

mentorship and leadership along the way? In what ways has the outgoing leader laid down the groundwork for the new leader to build on and enhance the strategic direction your firm has taken to this point? You should emphasize how the departing leader's expertise and legacy have been embedded into the organization's systems, values, and strategies, ensuring a strong foundation for the new leadership, and showing the thoughtful planning behind the transition. Also, celebrating the accomplishments of the outgoing leader, whether through carefully crafted media releases, feature stories, or public acknowledgments will underline the impact of their tenure and their unique values.

3. Owning the Narrative

During leadership transitions, it's crucial to communicate the reasons behind the change to manage perceptions and maintain brand integrity, as these moments often attract significant media and public attention. This is a critical "spotlight moment," an opportunity to capture the narrative and guide the conversation in a way that aligns with your company's goals. If you don't own the moment, the public and media can quickly fill the void with their speculations, which can lead to misinterpretations or negative headlines. This requires articulating the reasons behind the leadership change and framing it as a strategic move designed to enhance the organization's potential. For example, explaining how a new CEO's vision aligns with the company's long-term goals can shift the narrative from one of disruption to one of opportunity. Owning the narrative in this way not only minimizes concerns but also sets the stage for a smooth, successful transition that aligns with the company's transformation goals.

4. Leadership Positioning

When introducing a new leader, it's essential to demonstrate why they are the right fit for the company and its future. This can be done by connecting their vision to tangible organizational benefits, such as driving innovation, increasing

efficiency, or improving stakeholder relationships. For example, if the new leader has expertise in sustainability, highlight how their strategies will enhance the company's reputation for environmental responsibility, potentially leading to stronger customer loyalty and improved market positioning.

As the new leader gains insight into the organization, public relations should collaborate closely with them to communicate actionable plans that align with the company's long-term goals. This can be achieved through consistent messaging across all channels, press releases, internal communications, and stakeholder meetings that emphasize both vision and measurable outcomes. Highlighting how the new leader's strategies will improve return on investment or strengthen relationships ensures stakeholders view them as not just a visionary but as someone capable of delivering real, tangible results.

Nevertheless, public relations should not be confined to the leadership transition phase but must continue to work proactively throughout the leader's tenure, positioning the leader as a thought leader. This will, invariably, cultivate goodwill not only for the individual but also for the organization as a whole. This ongoing practice can influence not just perceptions, but also the bottom line, driving higher return on investment as stakeholders develop trust in both the leader's capabilities and the company's long-term direction.



Dynamics of Media and Governance

— Rasak Musbau 

Bio:

Rasak Musbau (ANIPR) is the Director of Public Affairs Unit at Lagos State Infrastructure Asset Management Agency, LASIAMA. With over 300 published articles and a background in Mass Communication, he specializes in government communication and media relations. Currently pursuing a PhD in Public Administration, Musbau is passionate about transparency, policy advocacy, and public discourse.



The relationship between media and governance is a complex dynamic that significantly influences political processes, decision-making, and public opinion. Understanding these interactions is essential, particularly for Public Relations (PR) professionals. This is because the media plays a pivotal role in shaping the public perception of government policies and actions.

For PR professionals working in government, grasping the nuances of media dynamics is essential for managing communication, shaping public perception, and influencing policy outcomes. Media outlets serve as crucial channels through which government policies and initiatives are communicated to the public.

PR professionals must adapt their strategies to ensure that government policies are not only well-received but also align with the expectations and concerns of the public. During crises or moments of heightened scrutiny, these professionals are responsible for guiding the government's narrative, managing its reputation, and ensuring that communications resonate with the public while upholding transparency and accountability.

Under President Bola Tinubu's leadership, the media has continued its long-standing role in addressing critical national issues such as economic reforms, security challenges, and corruption. In

particular, investigative reporting and persistent scrutiny have led to notable policy shifts and significant government responses. For instance, media coverage of the economic reforms spearheaded by the administration has fostered informed public discussions, enabling citizens to better understand the complexities of such reforms. Similarly, the media's focus on security issues has pressured the government to improve its efforts in tackling insurgency and ensuring national safety. Furthermore, the press has continued its vital role in advocating for press freedom, even in the face of challenges that threaten journalistic independence.

A notable example of the media's influence was the removal of fuel subsidies in May 2023 and the introduction of a floating exchange rate for the naira. Media coverage has pressured the government into broader discussions about economic reforms and social safety nets.

Also, security challenges—ranging from terrorism to insurgency and banditry—have also been closely monitored by the media. Under Tinubu, the media increased its scrutiny of the government's security policies, strategies, and assets, pushing the government to allocate more resources to national security and engage local communities in addressing instability. The media has similarly been instrumental in uncovering corruption within the Nigerian government. Investigative journalism has focused on scandals involving the misallocation of public funds, leading to calls for greater transparency in government financial dealings and stronger anti-corruption measures.

The media also plays a significant role in highlighting the economic impact of government policies, particularly those related to taxation, inflation, and the devaluation of the naira. Media campaigns, led by economists and business reporters, have been vocal in scrutinising the government's economic management and advocating for fiscal reforms. In response, the government adjusted its policies, including tax regulations and efforts to stabilize the naira. These developments highlight the media's power to influence economic governance and its ability to spark policy changes when public dissatisfaction is evident.

A free and independent press is crucial for exposing corruption, inefficiency, and abuse of power. Investigative journalism acts as a watchdog, ensuring that public officials are held accountable and answerable to the public. Media exposure of government scandals often leads to reforms or the resignation of corrupt officials, contributing to more transparent and accountable governance.

Additionally, a free press fosters public debate on policies, helping citizens understand complex issues and engage in democratic processes. When citizens are well-informed, they are more likely to participate in democratic processes such as voting. The media plays an essential role in educating the public about their rights and responsibilities, fostering civic engagement, and strengthening democratic participation.

Moreover, the media serves as a powerful tool for social change, advocating for human rights, equality, and justice. By bringing attention to issues such as police brutality, gender inequality, and minority rights, the media can push for policies that protect vulnerable groups. Coverage of these issues often pressures the government to review and reform policies to ensure that human rights are upheld and social justice is achieved.

However, despite these positive contributions, the media in Nigeria faces significant challenges that tend to undermine its effectiveness. Despite the existence of enabling laws and avowed commitment of government, bureaucracies often constrain media access to critical information. Another challenge is the influence of political, economic, or ideological interests on media outlets. Media bias, particularly during elections, can skew public opinion and hinder objective decision-making. Journalists also face harassment, intimidation, and violence when reporting on sensitive issues.

In some instances, governments exert control over media outlets, reducing the independence of the press. State-run media often serve as propaganda tools that suppress dissent and limit the diversity of voices in the media. This stifles public debate, prevents alternative viewpoints from emerging, and undermines democratic processes.

Financial pressures also pose a challenge to media freedom. Many media outlets rely on advertising revenue, which can lead to biased coverage or compromised journalistic integrity. This is particularly problematic in countries

with weak media markets, where financial dependence restricts the media's ability to operate independently.

Despite these challenges, media freedom remains essential for democracy and effective governance. A free press ensures transparency, accountability, and informed public discourse. It plays a critical role in promoting civic engagement, advocating for human rights, and driving policy reforms. To ensure good governance, media freedom must be protected by addressing the barriers that hinder its role in democratic societies.

In conclusion, the relationship between media and governance is fundamental to the functioning of democracy. The media's ability to inform, scrutinize, and hold the government accountable is essential for the development of transparent and inclusive governance. Protecting media freedom and addressing the challenges that undermine its role is critical to ensuring that governance remains accountable and the public's right to information is safeguarded.



Personal Branding for C-suite Executives: A Viable Strategy for Business and Leadership Transformation

— Satira Osemudiamen 

Bio:

Satira Osemudiamen is a public relations professional qualified by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), a skilled storyteller, and the principal consultant of Satira Media and Public Relations Limited. With extensive experience across multiple sectors in strategic communications and reputation management, Satira provides solutions that drive transformational change for both personal and corporate brands in Africa. She utilises her creativity, strong relationships, and storytelling abilities to design and implement custom strategies that effectively manage reputation and enhance commercial value.



The modern hyper-dependence on technology, social media, and artificial intelligence has set the evolution of public relations in motion and created a need for a new breed of business leaders—C-suite executives with a personal brand that can drive organisational growth. Personal branding is no longer just a buzzword; but an essential tool for business and leadership transformation. C-suite executives must understand that personal branding is now critical for visibility, driving significant business transformation, advancing leadership capabilities, and securing long-term success. Before diving into why personal branding is pivotal for business and leadership transformation, we need to

understand what personal branding is. According to Avery and Rachel Greenwald's submission in the Harvard Business Review, "Personal branding is the intentional, strategic practice of defining and expressing your value. It is also the amalgamation of the associations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and expectations, that people collectively hold about you". Yes, Jeff Bezos summed it up when he reportedly quipped that personal branding is "what people say about you when you're not in the room." Therefore, embracing personal branding is imperative for effective leadership in our contemporary and dynamic business landscape. For C-suite executives, personal branding

extends beyond polished images and viral videos. While a strong visual presence is important, it is not the entirety of personal branding. To create a brand that resonates with internal teams and the wider public, executives must first answer the question: **What do I stand for?**

As social media becomes more and more relevant, it is easy for C-suite executives to get distracted by trends in the name of developing their brand. However, the essence of effective personal branding lies in **authenticity**. There is no one-size-fits-all formula. One business leader may prefer written content over videos while another may enjoy creating experiences for others, such as events and collaborations.



The key is that the content feels genuine to the individual. Many impactful C-suite executives have built their brands by consistently presenting their authentic selves.

For instance, Mo Abudu, a media mogul and CEO of EbonyLife Media, has developed her brand with a steadfast dedication to African storytelling and empowerment of creatives through her movie projects, strategic partnerships, and most recently, her initiative- Lagos Canvas. Her commitment has allowed her to transcend the entertainment industry, emerging as a global icon and advocate for diverse voices. Similarly, Tony Elumelu, whose approach to personal branding is through fashion, impact projects, and parties, has redefined people's perception of professionals in the financial sector. He is deeply intertwined with his beliefs in transformative economic growth for Africa, eradication of poverty, the creation of prosperity for Africans, employment for the youth of Africa, and equitable energy transition that is beneficial for Africa. His unwavering showcase of personal beliefs and values has enabled him to lead in business and social impact, guiding Africa toward economic transformation. Debola Williams is another example of a seasoned entrepreneur and communications expert, who exemplifies effective personal branding. His brand is rooted in youth leadership, social change, and innovation, and his

authenticity resonates through his connections with audiences—especially in his public advocacy for African youth and innovation. Debola's ability to align his passions with his business pursuits has established him as an influential thought leader. These executives didn't achieve their well-established brands overnight; it took consistent effort over time. They led with their values, and their brands followed suit.

However, as I have begun a case for business executives to consider personal branding, I cannot help but address the pressure that comes with it. Over the years as the owner of a PR agency, I noticed prospective clients under intense pressure to develop a strong personal brand and become thought leaders. LinkedIn, in particular, amplifies this pressure, as every scroll reveals new posts and articles, each vying for attention and promoting the idea that personal branding must happen instantaneously. However, the reality is that personal branding takes time. It is neither magic nor a race. For C-suite executives, personal branding should focus more on authenticity and the evolution of their career journey or purpose rather than simply showcasing polished images or videos. This journey begins when you can answer questions like Who am I?, engage in reflection exercises, or take personality tests to help lay the foundation for what your brand will represent. I had to rely on personality

tests, feedback from close colleagues, and personal reflection to articulate my identity. This has made me advise my C-suite executive clients to embrace a gradual approach to building a personal brand and journey of self-discovery.

Similar to any branding effort, C-suite executives must identify the different types of brand personas and decide which best reflects their identity. These personas include:

1. **The Altruist:** Individuals recognised for their commitment to helping others, such as Mo Abudu, whose focus is telling the Nigerian story, have garnered global acclaim.
2. **The Careerist:** Career-driven leaders concentrated on business success and professional advancement. Tony Elumelu's brand, deeply connected to African entrepreneurship, is a classic example of a Careerist.
3. **The Connector:** Leaders skilled at fostering relationships and connecting people across various sectors. This is evident in Debola's leadership development and networking.
4. **The Selective:** A more private persona that shares specific content tailored to a narrow audience. Although less visible in mass media, their influence is significant within specialised professional circles. I would say I fall under this class.

Understanding one's brand persona enables executives to leverage their strengths while creating content and strategies that genuinely resonate with their target audience. The transformation brought about by a robust personal brand extends beyond external perceptions. It profoundly impacts business and leadership success and its benefits are endless. Some of these are:

1. **Trust and Authority:** A well-developed personal brand fosters trust and positions executives as authorities in their industries. When a leader's

values align with their company's, it strengthens credibility internally and externally.

2. **Media Visibility:** A strong personal brand increases the likelihood of being featured in media outlets, including online publications, magazines, and podcasts. This visibility can enhance both the executive's influence and business impact.
3. **Networking Opportunities:** As C-suite executives build their brands, they establish a clearer identity, making it easier to connect with other entrepreneurs, investors, and thought leaders. A strong personal brand facilitates meaningful business relationships and partnerships.
4. **Attracting Ideal Clients:** Executives with a clear personal brand attract ideal clients and

opportunities. Their visibility as thought leaders positions them as go-to experts in their field, creating demand for their services and products.

5. **Premium Pricing:** A well-established personal brand allows executives to justify charging premium prices for their expertise, products, and services. The trust and authority built through personal branding reinforce their value.
6. **Creating a Lasting Platform:** An executive's brand can grow and evolve. Just as with their businesses, personal brands can diversify and adapt, enhancing their long-term impact and success.

Building a strong personal brand as a C-suite executive does not happen overnight. It requires time, patience, and, most importantly, authenticity. While it may be

tempting to jump on trends or mimic other successful leaders, the true strength of a personal brand lies in understanding and presenting your authentic self. The executives who truly stand out and lead with integrity, purpose, and a deep understanding of who they are. Mo Abudu, Tony Elumelu, and Debola Williams didn't become icons by rushing the process; they spent years building trust, creating resonant content, and maintaining consistency in their messaging. To fellow C-suite leaders: your brand is not just a marketing tool. It is a reflection of your leadership, values, and long-term vision. Take the time to understand who you are, what you stand for, and how you can share that with the world. Your brand will naturally evolve from there.



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Reputation Management in the Age of Social Media

— Samuel Viavonu 

Bio:

Samuel Viavonu is a communications professional with expertise in marketing, public relations, and digital strategy. As a Media Associate at NOVVA Media and Communications, he develops strategic communication plans, manages media relations, and crafts compelling narratives that shape perceptions and drive brand growth. Outside of work, he enjoys meaningful conversations, volunteering with social impact initiatives, and discovering great books and podcasts. He also writes stories that explore the intersections of identity, media, technology and culture.



Reputation is fundamental to business success, driving growth, expansion, and sustained relevance. It is not merely **an asset**, but a **critical operational necessity**.

The advent of social media has fundamentally altered public perception of businesses and their leadership, presenting both opportunities and significant risks.

Each online interaction, from posts to comments, can rapidly influence a brand's narrative. The instantaneous dissemination of information, coupled with the potential for perception to overshadow factual accuracy, elevates reputation management to an indispensable component of strategic growth. Reputation

management encompasses the strategic efforts to shape, guide, and improve public perception of a brand, organization, or individual.

Historically, business reputation was cultivated through interpersonal communication and community engagement. Merchants in antiquity relied on trust-based relationships, and as industries modernized, mass media advertising (print, radio, and television) became the primary vehicle for image cultivation and broader audience reach. However, the advent of social media has fundamentally transformed reputation management into a dynamic, real-time process. These platforms have become the

modern public square, providing avenues for direct brand engagement while simultaneously increasing vulnerability to immediate public scrutiny. With a global user base exceeding 5.22 billion (DataReportal), social media significantly influences public opinion, thought leadership, and consumer trust. The impact of online perception is underscored by research indicating that 93% of consumers consult online reviews before purchasing.

As Chris Anderson, former editor of Wired Magazine, aptly puts it, "Your brand isn't what you say it is; it's what Google says it is."

Social media presents a dual challenge: while its rapid dissemination capabilities can amplify positive narratives, it also facilitates the swift propagation of misinformation and negative feedback, potentially escalating into reputational crises. Moreover, the current emphasis on transparency and authenticity necessitates that brands consistently act following their stated values, as any perceived misalignment risks significant backlash.

Evolving consumer expectations demand immediate responsiveness to inquiries, complaints, and crises. The rise of "cancel culture" further intensifies these pressures, requiring brands to communicate with sensitivity and unwavering consistency. The 2017 United Airlines incident, in which a passenger was forcibly removed from an overbooked flight, serves as a stark example.

The ensuing viral video and global outrage resulted in lasting damage to the airline's reputation, despite subsequent apologies and policy revisions. This incident highlights the potential for a single event to indelibly shape public perception of a brand.

Effective reputation management in the current digital environment hinges on proactive engagement. Social listening enables organizations to monitor online discourse and assess public sentiment, thereby mitigating potential reputational risks before they escalate.

Platforms such as Brandwatch, Hootsuite, and Sprout Social facilitate the identification of emerging trends, provide insights into customer needs, and empower timely and relevant responses. Amstel Malta's 2016 "Why Add More" campaign exemplifies the strategic value of social listening. By recognizing consumer demand for healthier alternatives, the brand successfully positioned itself as a premium, lower-sugar malt beverage, strengthening consumer trust and brand loyalty.

Authenticity remains paramount in cultivating and maintaining a positive reputation. Transparent

communication, coupled with a willingness to acknowledge and rectify errors, and genuine engagement with target audiences are essential for building enduring loyalty. Conversely, delayed responses or generic, impersonal apologies can be counterproductive, while authentic, human-centric communication fosters trust and strengthens stakeholder relationships.

Crisis management is now a critical component of reputation management. In the social media era, crises can emerge rapidly and unexpectedly, necessitating a well-defined and adaptable crisis management framework. Organizations must establish contingency plans, designate crisis response teams, and implement clear communication protocols. Real-time responses during a crisis demonstrate accountability, while post-crisis evaluations provide valuable insights for preventing future occurrences. Beyond crisis response, proactive storytelling is essential for shaping a brand's ongoing digital narrative. Sharing thought leadership, highlighting corporate social responsibility initiatives, and showcasing brand achievements contribute to a robust and positive reputation. This proactive approach establishes a strong digital identity.

Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick exemplifies this strategy, effectively reinforcing the brand's commitment to social justice. Measuring and analyzing the effectiveness of reputation management efforts is crucial. Analyzing brand sentiment, monitoring engagement rates and interactions across posts and campaigns, and benchmarking against competitors provide valuable insights into public perception and inform strategic adjustments.

Leadership plays an indispensable role in reputation management. Leaders embody organizational values, and their actions directly influence public perception. Tony Elumelu's commitment to entrepreneurship and economic development through the Tony Elumelu Foundation has established

him as a respected thought leader, positively impacting the reputation of his business ventures. Conversely, Boeing's handling of the 737 Max crisis serves as a cautionary example. Reports of a cultural shift prioritizing speed over safety eroded public trust, demonstrating the severe reputational consequences of misaligned corporate values. Leaders are therefore critical in ensuring value alignment, especially during times of crisis.

Effective reputation management in the social media age transcends reactive damage control; it requires a proactive, strategic, and adaptive approach. By leveraging social listening tools, fostering authentic engagement, and prioritizing transparency, trust, and timely action, brands can cultivate and protect their reputations. Success in this dynamic environment will be achieved by those organizations and leaders who integrate reputation management into their core identity, rather than treating it as an afterthought.

As narratives continue to evolve in real-time, the critical question remains: How will your organization shape its narrative?



Contextual Innovation for African Leaders in Today's Digital Era

— Sadey Simeon



Bio:

Sadey Simeon is a marketing and communications executive with extensive experience across industries. She currently serves as the Head of Digital for Ogilvy Africa/Nigeria. Sadey's career in marketing and communications spans over a decade, during which she has worked with some of the most reputable companies in Nigeria, including Microsoft, Jumia, and Airtel. Before joining Ogilvy, Sadey worked as Marketing and Communications Manager for Casava Microinsurance. In addition to her communications expertise, Sadey is also an accomplished leader with a track record of building high-performing teams. She is passionate about mentoring and developing young professionals and has been recognized for her outstanding leadership skills. Outside of work, Sadey is actively involved in community development initiatives and volunteers to support non-profit organizations that focus on women and youth development. She is also an avid reader and enjoys travelling to new places to experience different cultures and try new food.



The New African Cultural Paradigm

The African cultural paradigm, which includes our traditions, beliefs, and lifestyles that have been handed down through the centuries and form the foundation of our society, continues to significantly impact 21st-century African society. It also makes up a significant portion of what is currently deemed relevant or culturally appropriate. This is not to argue, however, that European culture hasn't had an impact on our society; this can be seen in even the most ordinary things. Our culture has been greatly impacted by historical occurrences like colonialism, particularly in relation to shifts in our social structures, governance, religion, and even educational systems.

This layering of the foundational cultural paradigm and European influence has created a perfect sandwich society with a unique blend of African and European influences that is still very much African. With this new perspective in mind, how then can African leaders especially women innovate and reshape their business strategies for a digital era?

This article examines how African leaders can combine tradition and modernity by utilizing traditional knowledge and cultural perspectives to innovate and prosper in the digital world.

The Modern African Cultural Paradigm; Through a Female Lens

The twenty-first-century African society stands at a unique crossroads where tradition meets transformation. Here in Nigeria, we have always acknowledged the strength of female leadership. From the traditional title holders who historically have had a major influence on communal decision-making to the market women's groups. Nowadays, this context blends with modern commercial methods and creates what could be referred to as a "cultural-digital tapestry."

Let's look at an example of the evolution of the ancient "ajo" practice. To preserve the social nature of communal saving while still implementing modern financial tracking a security, business leaders around Nigeria have digitalized this traditional financial system.

This is the height of contextual innovation; it goes beyond just digitization and gives us a chance to combine new technical solutions with regular problem-solving techniques. This illustrates how modern instruments can support customs while preserving the sense of community that characterizes the African culture.

Harnessing Digital Tools And Strategies For This New Paradigm

We are still in the early stages of the digital era, therefore African leaders must be more committed to utilizing the enormous potential of this shift or risk falling behind. However, to promote sustainable growth, we must contextualize our usage by embracing local cultural nuances in usage, much like everything else that has worked in the African climate.

Digital Co-Creation and Communal Collaboration

African communities have historically used complex approaches to problem-solving that prioritize holistic thinking, iterative learning, and collective wisdom. For instance, in Nigeria, where establishing relationships frequently comes before conducting business, effective digital platforms are not just effective but also intimate. The growth of social commerce via Instagram and WhatsApp serves as one illustration. Companies have perfected the skill of fusing digital transactions with social engagement, resulting in virtual marketplaces that replicate the sense of community found in real markets. Instead of assuming that these traditional approaches are outdated, we should rather understand that they serve as a helpful foundation for modern business innovation and decision-making, which usually involves a communal approach to problem-solving and community consultation. When you pair these approaches with digital platforms, it creates powerful new models of innovation like:

- **Digital Town Halls:** To facilitate widespread stakeholder participation in decision-making while upholding cultural norms, leaders are developing virtual venues that resemble conventional community meetings. For instance, Instagram Live, Twitter Spaces, etc.
- **Digital technologies** that support group problem-solving while honoring established social structures and hierarchies are known as collaborative innovation platforms. Telegram, WhatsApp, and others are examples.
- **Knowledge Sharing Networks:** Online platforms that capture and distribute collective wisdom while preserving oral traditions.

Storytelling in the Digital Context

Beyond efficiency, digital platforms can serve as vehicles for preserving and amplifying traditional practices like storytelling. African oral traditions and storytelling have long served as vehicles for knowledge

transfer, preserving cultural heritage, instilling moral values, teaching history, and imparting practical knowledge. It is the job of modern leaders to find innovative and contextual ways to integrate these narrative approaches into digital communication. For instance, businesses can use multimedia storytelling to communicate complete business context to ensure their consumers relate in more culturally relevant ways. They could also look into creating digital archives or documentation of their experience or problem-solving approaches that help other businesses and people alike if they ever come across such issues. They could also integrate story-based learning systems into their digital content strategies and develop training programs that can combine traditional narrative methods with digital delivery systems.

Making Decisions Based on Data and Cultural Intelligence

While data-driven tactics offer a basis for scaling these culturally relevant breakthroughs, narrative enhances the human connection. As is well known, the African market already has a substantial data gap. Businesses frequently struggle to make well-informed decisions due to a lack of accurate and thorough market data. To make well-informed judgments, company executives must actively gather and analyze data. Ideally, they should also propose novel methods for interpreting data that take cultural settings into account, such as using cultural lenses to analyze data to spot significant trends and possibilities and creating measurement systems that monitor both commercial results and cultural relevance. They may additionally explore developing indicators that define success for the company a represent local values.

The Igbo Apprenticeship System is a simple illustration of an African business practice that reflects many of the ideas covered in the East. Its core principles which are knowledge transfer, community-based trust, capital formation, and network effects, offer significant opportunities for cultural-digital integration. Even though most business owners using

this apprenticeship system lack digital tools, they should be encouraged to do so. Fintech and crowdfunding platforms could simplify capital formation, while blockchain and digital reputation systems could aid in improving trust networks. Platforms for supply chains and e-commerce can also help to expand their trade networks while still maintaining their sense of community. Systems like the Igbo Apprenticeship show how mundane methods can be easily incorporated into new-age digital techniques, to provide scalable, culturally-based solutions.

The Future of African Leadership in Today's Digital Era

Let's face it, implementing the newest technology alone won't be enough to transform African leadership in the digital age. It involves going back to our roots, preserving what is truly ours, and fusing it with contemporary creativity. We have always approached problem-solving in a unique method that is based on trust, community, and people. These resources are not just peculiarities of culture, they instead represent a set of assets that are well suited for our current drive for digital solutions.

Consider the Igbo Apprenticeship System, there's so much to learn in terms of trust, mentoring, business acumen, etc., so much so that it could be said to be a masterclass on its own. Now imagine what would happen if we combined all this tech including the financial e-commerce, content,..... the whole nine yards? You would then realize that we are not just innovating but we are also developing solutions that are 100% African and completely ours.

To be a leader in this space is proportional to honouring where we're coming from while boldly stepping into where we're headed next, but mostly, it's about building business models that make sense to us but can hold their own on the global stage.

Leveraging Storytelling for Social Impact: How PR Can Champion Change in a Digital, Globalized World

— Chiamaka .A. Nwabulo 

Bio:

Chiamaka A.Nwabulo, ACIPR, is an accomplished writer, communicator and PR professional for Del-York Group. With over three years of diverse experience in Communication, Advertising, Public Relations, and Development, throughout her career, she has excelled in storytelling, bringing a unique perspective enriched by strong narrative skills. Her genuine passion and strategic insight for crafting transformative PR campaigns drives her to set new standards, inspire, educate, and empower meaningful change.



What is Storytelling?

Storytelling at its core, is the art of weaving narratives that connect with our deepest human emotions. It's about sharing experiences, forging emotional links between the teller and the listener, conveying truths, and motivating action. Stories have the power to inform and educate, making them a potent tool for communication. In the context of PR, storytelling is not just about sharing information; it is about creating a connection between an organization, its audience, and the broader society.

Long before the written word, humans communicated through stories—around campfires, cave paintings, and intricate dances. These early forms of storytelling served as vital means of passing down knowledge, preserving cultural traditions, and shaping collective understanding. From ancient myths and legends to modern-day films and social media campaigns, storytelling has evolved, adapting to new mediums while retaining its inherent power to captivate, persuade, and transform.

Effective Storytelling in PR involves creating authentic, relatable, and impactful narratives, which often highlight real-life experiences, challenges, and triumphs, making them more engaging and persuasive than conventional communication. In today's interconnected world, where information is abundant and attention spans are fleeting, storytelling remains a vital strategy tool for cutting through the noise and making an indispensable tool for PR professionals.

The Power of Narrative in a Digital Age:

The digital revolution has transformed storytelling into an accessible art form. Anyone with a smartphone can now be a storyteller, sharing their experiences and perspectives with a global audience. This shift has empowered marginalized voices and created a complex media landscape that PR professionals must skillfully navigate. While the mediums may have evolved, the core power of storytelling remains unchanged. A well-crafted narrative can penetrate cognitive barriers, resonating emotionally with audiences

and motivating them to take action in ways that mere statistics and data fail to achieve.

The Role of Storytelling In PR for Social Impact:

Public Relations is fundamentally about managing relationships and communication between organizations and their stakeholders. PR professionals are uniquely positioned to transform storytelling into a force for social good. They are the architects of public perception, adept in shaping messages that connect with target audiences and influence behaviour. In the context of social impact, professionals can tap into the power of narrative to:

- **Humanize Complex Issues:** Social problems, such as poverty, inequality, or environmental degradation, are often complex and multifaceted. Storytelling can break down these complex issues into relatable human experiences, making them more accessible and understandable. Instead of citing statistics on poverty, a PR campaign might tell the story of a family struggling to provide for their multiple children, putting a human face on the issue and fostering empathy.
- **Inspire Empathy and Action:** Stories evoke emotions, and emotions motivate audiences to take action around a common cause. By sharing stories of resilience, hope, and triumph over adversity, PR professionals can inspire individuals to get involved, donate to causes, or advocate for policy changes.
- **Amplify Marginalized Voices:** Storytelling provides a platform for underrepresented communities to share their experiences and perspectives. PR professionals can

raise awareness about social injustices and advocate for greater equity and inclusion.

- **Challenge Preconceived Notions:** Narratives can challenge stereotypes and preconceived notions about certain groups or issues. By showcasing diverse perspectives and experiences, PR professionals can promote greater understanding and break down barriers.

How PR Professionals Can Champion Change Through Storytelling:

In today's digital age, professionals have an incredible array of tools and platforms at their fingertips to harness the power of storytelling for social impact. Some strategies employed can be:

1. **Harnessing Digital Platforms:** Your smartphones, systems, and gadgets empower you to connect with audiences far beyond your immediate surroundings. Social media, blogs, podcasts, and video content offer PR professionals unprecedented opportunities to receive and share stories on a global scale. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and more allow for real-time engagement and interaction, making it easier to build momentum around social causes.
2. **Identify your audience:** Telling stories is not merely entertainment; it serves as a vehicle for expression and communication. By deeply understanding your audience's values, interests, and preferred platforms, you can discover what narrative to follow.
3. **Collaborating with Influencers and Advocates:** The internet has made influencers more visible and active, so there are no excuses. Partnering with influencers, activists, and community leaders can amplify the reach and impact of storytelling campaigns. These collaborations lend credibility and authenticity to the narratives being shared.
4. **Using Data-Driven Stories:** Combining storytelling with data and statistics can make narratives more compelling and credible. For example, sharing stories backed by data on poverty, education, gender rights, violence,

healthcare and more can highlight the urgency of addressing these issues.

5. **Focusing On Local Contexts:** Storytelling stems from the grassroots. Effective storytelling requires an understanding of the cultural, social, and political context. PR professionals must tailor their narratives to resonate with local communities while addressing global challenges.
6. **Measuring Impact:** To ensure the effectiveness of storytelling campaigns, PR professionals should track key metrics such as engagement, reach, and behavioral change. This data can inform future strategies and demonstrate the tangible impact of their efforts.

Leveraging Storytelling for Social Impact in Nigeria.

Nigeria, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse population, grappling with a multitude of factors, offers a fertile ground for impactful storytelling. Home to resilient communities and a growing youth eager for change, PR professionals can use storytelling techniques to address these problems.

In many parts of the world, specifically, Nigeria, cultural and economic barriers prevent girls from accessing education. Sharing stories of these young girls who have overcome these challenges to pursue their dreams, these narratives can inspire communities to support girls' education and advocate for policy education.

Gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue in Nigeria. PR campaigns can continually use narratives to raise awareness about the dangers, share information, and survivor stories and promote resources for victims. By humanizing the issue, these efforts can help drive societal change and encourage accountability.

With over 60% of Nigeria's population under 25, the youth represent a growing force for change. PR professionals can share stories of young innovators, entrepreneurs, and activists driving positive change in their communities. These narratives can inspire other young people to dream, take action and contribute to nation-building.

Many Nigerians lack access to quality

healthcare, particularly in rural areas. Storytelling can highlight the challenges faced by these communities and advocate for greater investment in healthcare infrastructure and services. Addressing healthcare disparities can demonstrate the need for reform in the healthcare sector and the impact of positive change.

Nigeria is grappling with an environmental crisis. All around us, if you look, you'll see the need to tell stories that impact these issues on local and regional communities and promote sustainable practices.

Fostering national unity with a diverse nation such as Nigeria with multiple ethnic and religious groups through storytelling can be used to celebrate and highlight cross-cultural collaboration, bridging the divide and building a stronger national identity. Through community storytelling projects, documentary films, highlighting case studies, music, social media campaigns and more, stories can spread far, empowering individuals to become agents of positive change.

Ultimately, while storytelling can be a powerful tool for social good, PR professionals must be mindful of the ethical considerations involved. It is crucial to:

- **Tell Authentic Stories:** Stories should be based on real experiences and perspectives. Avoid sensationalizing or exaggerating narratives for the sake of impact.
- **Obtain Consent:** Ensure that individuals whose stories are being shared have given their informed consent.
- **Avoid Exploitation:** Be mindful of the power dynamics involved in storytelling and avoid exploiting vulnerable communities.

Conclusion:

The world is increasingly dominated by information overload. Storytelling remains a powerful and enduring force for change. By embracing the power of narrative, Public Relations (PR) professionals in Nigeria and globally, are uniquely qualified and positioned to do what is right, telling authentic stories in driving social impact, addressing social issues, inspiring action, and building a more just and equitable society.

PR Surgeons: How the Operating Room of Strategic Communication Saves Brands and Leaders

— Favour Egbogun



Bio:

Favour Egbogun is a Public Relations Consultant & Communications professional. A resourceful Communications Consultant closing in on nearly half a decade of experience in Public Relations, Digital & Social Media Account handling, Program & Event Management, Media Relations, and Creative writing. Known for creating impactful PR campaigns and effective storytelling designed to achieve strategic results for clients and stakeholders.



PR Surgeons: How the Operating Room of Strategic Communication Saves Brands and Leaders

I was in a mall, and word had spread that I was wearing an item that could harm everyone there. What started as a joke between me and a stranger about my watch's ability to create a bomb had spiraled into something far more serious. A voice over the mall's speaker announced the presence of a 'bomb maker'—me. Panic erupted. People scrambled towards the exits, while others rushed in my direction, their faces filled with terror and rage. I barely had time to process what was happening when I saw my image flashing on the mall's large digital screens. I was being branded as a

threat, and the consequences could be catastrophic.

I turned and shoved my way through the chaotic crowd, heart pounding. That was when a man in a white jacket appeared from nowhere, rushing toward me. He looked like a doctor.

"Come with me! We can help you," he urged. Behind him, a group of professionals sat inside a large white bus, watching me intently. "Who exactly are you?" I asked, skeptical. "We can help you safeguard your reputation by rewriting your story." "How?" I asked, still breathless as I saw the enraged mob pushing forward. Amidst the chaos, I had two choices—trust these strangers or face

the consequences of a false narrative running wild. I ran into the bus.

This story may seem exaggerated, but in the digital age, it is not far from reality. A single unchecked rumor, a poorly handled crisis, or a careless statement, can cut deep, sometimes fatally, into a brand's reputation. Much like in surgery, where a single miscalculation can put a patient at risk, mismanaged communication can place a brand or leader on life support. It is no longer news that Public Relations (PR) is not just about press releases and media coverage. It is about precision in strategy, crisis management, and reputation reconstruction. A brand or leader's narrative can either be carefully



sutured together for long-term success or left open to infections of misinformation that could spread uncontrollably.

How do businesses and individuals ensure they remain in control of their stories instead of becoming casualties of public opinion?

1. Proactive Reputation Management – The Preventative Care Approach

A strong reputation, like a healthy body, requires consistent care. Waiting until a crisis erupts is like ignoring symptoms until emergency surgery is the only option. The key to sustainable reputation management is **proactive monitoring and early intervention. 90% of the time, a crisis can be prevented.**

- **Information Management:** it is crucial to manage information communicated to prevent unclear statements from spiraling into a crisis (Just like the watch bomb joke in the story).
- **Brand Consistency:** A surgeon follows strict procedural guidelines, every communication, whether social media posts or press statements, must **align with your brand's core values.**
- **Media Relations:** Building relationships with journalists and influencers is like having a trusted team in the operating room.

When a crisis arises, you have skilled people at your fingertips.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Keep open lines of communication with employees, customers, and partners. This ensures that when rumors or crises emerge, there is already a foundation of trust.

2. Crisis Communication – Emergency Surgery to Stop the Bleeding

In PR, crises are like medical emergencies; unexpected but inevitable. The difference between survival and total collapse lies in the speed and accuracy of the response.

- **Speed is Critical:** In surgery, every second counts. The longer a crisis lingers without response, the more damage it inflicts. Having a crisis communication plan in place ensures swift action.
- **Transparency Saves Lives (and Reputations):** Patients trust doctors who communicate openly. Similarly, admitting mistakes when necessary, clarifying misinformation, and delivering factual responses can prevent long-term damage.
- **The Right Spokesperson Matters:** Just as a surgeon needs steady hands, the individual addressing the media must be trained in crisis communication to ensure precision and credibility.

3. Digital Storytelling – Precision in Narrative Construction

Every brand and leader must carefully craft and execute their story instead of allowing external forces to dissect it.

- **Leverage Owned Media:** A surgeon controls their operating tools, brands must use blogs, social media, podcasts, and videos to maintain authority over their narrative.
- **Emotional Connection Matters:** Surgery is not just about technical expertise; Likewise, storytelling is not just about facts, it is about connecting with audiences on an emotional level. Your tone and language matter.

4. Engage PR For Leadership Transformation

PR involves shaping and refining leadership presence. The most impactful leaders understand that perception is just as important as performance.

- **Thought Leadership:** Patients trust knowledgeable doctors. Likewise, leaders who share ideas and lead industry conversations build a stronger presence and establish connections.
- **Strategic Media Positioning:** From keynote speeches to expert interviews, visibility sustains influence and credibility.

Leadership transformation through PR is about shaping perceptions intentionally, rather than leaving them open to dissection by the public.

At the end of the day, Every Leader Must Make A Choice Between Chaos and Control

Back to the story, the moment I stepped onto that bus, I had a choice: **to operate on my narrative or allow it to hemorrhage out of control.** Every brand and leader faces the same decision. You can either let the world tell your story, or you can **take the scalpel into your own hands**, carefully crafting, protecting, and even repairing your reputation with the precision of strategic PR.

The Visibility-to-Value Shift – How Modern Leaders Use PR for Measurable Impact

— Beatrice Miangogo-Eneje 

Bio:

Beatrice Miangogo-Eneje, fondly called Bibi Eneje, is a seasoned communications and public relations professional with a proven track record of crafting impactful narratives and executing innovative PR strategies. With extensive experience in personal branding, media relations, and strategic partnerships, Bibi Eneje has worked with a diverse portfolio of individuals and businesses, including CEOs, creative entrepreneurs, and leading organizations in tech, hospitality, and the creative industries. Known for her ability to amplify stories that matter, Beatrice has successfully shaped public perception and driven brand awareness through strategic campaigns. She is passionate about helping individuals and organizations articulate their core message and achieve their goals. She is also the author of CORE, a powerful guide created to help you discover, articulate, and communicate the heart of your brand; your core message. An accomplished event moderator and thought leader, Bibi Eneje has hosted insightful discussions on topics ranging from the Nigerian creative industry to the intersection of technology and storytelling, as well as the crucial role of publicists and communications professionals in today's society. Through her work, she aims to inspire and empower others to unlock their potential and make a lasting impact in their fields.



The Visibility-to-Value Shift: How Modern Leaders Use PR for Measurable Impact

It's 2025, and everywhere you turn, there's a social media post, an advert, a video, or opinion piece on the importance of crafting a powerful personal brand. The digital landscape is saturated with "how-tos" on building visibility and putting oneself out there. Experienced professionals, business owners, and leaders turn to publicists to boost brand awareness.

But public relations today has evolved beyond traditional media coverage and brand awareness. While visibility remains important, modern leaders must shift their focus

to leveraging PR as a tool for measurable business and leadership impact. PR should be viewed as a strategic approach that drives credibility, influence, and sustainable growth.

PR has long been associated with awareness-building. However, in today's business landscape, where customers, stakeholders, and investors demand more than just a strong presence, leaders must embrace PR as a tool for driving real business outcomes. This shift requires moving from surface-level exposure to deep, meaningful impact that fosters trust, credibility, and long-term influence. Leaders who understand this shift use PR to drive business growth by aligning

communication strategies with revenue-generating activities, build credibility through thought leadership, strengthen communities by integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR), and enhance reputation management to ensure their brand narrative remains authentic and impactful.

One of the most effective ways to move beyond visibility is by embracing thought leadership. Many executives assume that being vocal on social media or appearing in the press is enough. However, true thought leadership involves consistently providing valuable insights, challenging industry norms, and influencing decision-making. It allows leaders to express their

passion for industry advancement and societal growth. Research-backed articles and reports provide key stakeholders and potential investors with deep insights into industry challenges while serving as a valuable resource for newcomers and young professionals. By sharing knowledge and insights, leaders can inspire action, shape industry conversations, and create a ripple effect that future generations will benefit from.

Another critical area where PR moves from visibility to value is community engagement. The era of superficial CSR efforts is over. Today's stakeholders expect brands to demonstrate an authentic and sustained commitment to meaningful causes. Rather than jumping on trending topics for publicity, leaders must choose initiatives that align with their brand's mission and values. Community impact should be intentional, addressing real needs rather than just generating media attention. This requires collaborating with local stakeholders to develop sustainable, long-term solutions that make a real difference. When done

right, community engagement strengthens brand credibility, fosters deeper connections, and creates positive social impact all while reinforcing a leader's influence in their industry. Storytelling remains one of the most powerful tools in PR. However, modern storytelling is not just about crafting a compelling brand narrative, it's about shaping perception with purpose and ensuring alignment with business objectives and societal impact. For storytelling to be effective, it must be genuine and people-centered. People connect with authenticity, not perfection. Leaders who master storytelling focus on communicating their values, purpose, and impact in a way that resonates with customers and stakeholders. Authenticity has become a buzzword, but in PR, it is key. Audiences today can easily detect insincerity, making it crucial for leaders to ensure their narratives are rooted in real experiences, actions, and values.

For PR to truly move from visibility to value, leaders must establish clear metrics for success. Traditional PR metrics such as media mentions

and social media reach are no longer enough. Instead, PR strategies should be evaluated based on brand sentiment, community impact, and thought leadership effectiveness. By focusing on measurable outcomes, leaders can ensure their PR efforts contribute to long-term business and leadership growth.

The evolution of PR from a tool for visibility to a driver of measurable impact signals a new era of strategic communication. Modern leaders who harness PR effectively do not just seek exposure; they use it as a catalyst for credibility, community engagement, business growth, and long-term influence. For executives, entrepreneurs, and PR professionals, the challenge is clear: shift the focus from surface-level PR wins to strategies that create real value. By embracing thought leadership, meaningful storytelling, and authentic community engagement, leaders can ensure their PR efforts drive not just awareness, but lasting, measurable success.



Evaluating Public Relations Strategies for Driving Brand Awareness on Facebook and X

— Christabel Ebhonu 

Bio:

Christabel Ebhonu is a media enthusiast, dedicated teen coach, and studio officer at Admiralty University of Nigeria. With over four years of experience, I create multimedia content to promote the institution's image. My commitment to youth empowerment shines through initiatives like the Teen Stars Skills Training, where I am the convener. She has a BSc in Banking and Finance, and I am currently on my PgD in Journalism and Media Studies.



Introduction

Social media platforms like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) have become indispensable tools for brands seeking to enhance their visibility and engage with their target audiences. With millions of active users on these platforms, businesses have now been offered opportunities to leverage public relations (PR) strategies to build their brand awareness and bring meaningful relationships with their audiences. However, as competition intensifies in today's digital environment, brands must begin to adopt innovative approaches to make them stand out. This article explores how Equity Theory can be applied to PR

strategies on Facebook and X, emphasizing the role of perceived fairness in driving audience engagement, loyalty, and trust. Through researchers' views and expert opinions, particularly from Nigerian contexts, this study demonstrates how brands can strengthen their presence in the digital landscape.

Equity Theory in Public Relations

Equity Theory, originally developed by John Stacey Adams (1965), posits that individuals seek fairness in their relationships and interactions. When applied to PR strategies, this theory suggests that audiences are more likely to engage with brands that treat them fairly and value their

contributions. On social media platforms like Facebook and X, fairness can manifest in various ways, such as transparent communication, responsive customer service, and inclusive content creation.

For instance, when a brand responds promptly to customer inquiries or acknowledges user-generated content, it fosters a sense of equity and reciprocity (Smith & Pettijohn, 2018). This, in turn, enhances audience engagement and strengthens brand loyalty. By incorporating Equity Theory into their PR efforts, brands can create a balanced relationship with their audiences, ultimately driving brand awareness and equity.

Researchers' Views on Perceived Fairness and Audience Engagement

Researchers have extensively studied the role of PR strategies in driving brand awareness on social media platforms. According to Adeola and Evans (2020), social media provides brands a unique opportunity to amplify their visibility and engage with audiences in real-time. They argue that platforms like Facebook and X allow brands to share updates, promotions, and stories, ensuring their messages reach a global audience. Moreover, Olaniran and Williams (2020) highlight the importance of two-way communication in PR strategies. They note that social media enables brands to interact with their audiences through comments, direct messages, and polls, fostering a sense of community and trust. This interactive approach is particularly effective in building brand loyalty and enhancing audience engagement.

The Role of Social Media in Public Relations: Researchers' Perspectives

Social media has revolutionized the field of public relations by providing brands with direct access to their audiences. Below are the key roles of social media in PR:

1. **Increasing the Visibility of Your Brand:** Social media platforms like Facebook and X allow brands to reach a global audience instantly. For example, Nigerian brands like MTN Nigeria and Dangote Group use these platforms to share updates, promotions, and stories, ensuring their messages are seen by millions (Adeola & Evans, 2020).
2. **Facilitating Two-Way Communication:** Unlike traditional media, social media enables interactive communication. Brands can engage with their audiences through comments, direct messages, and polls, fostering a sense of community and trust (Nwankwo & Ajemunigbohun, 2013).
3. **Crisis Management:** Social media is a critical tool for

addressing crises in real-time. For instance, when a brand faces negative publicity, it can use platforms like X to issue statements, clarify misunderstandings, and rebuild trust (Olaniran & Williams, 2020).

4. **Building Brand Loyalty:** By consistently sharing valuable content and engaging with followers, brands can cultivate loyalty. For example, MTN Nigeria's responsive customer service on X has earned it a loyal customer base (MTN Nigeria, 2023).
5. **Showcasing Social Responsibility:** Social media allows brands to highlight their contributions to society. Dangote Group, for instance, uses Facebook to share stories about its community development projects, enhancing its reputation (Dangote Group, 2023).

Nigerian Brands on Facebook and X

Several Nigerian brands have successfully leveraged PR strategies on Facebook and X to drive brand awareness and engagement. One notable example is MTN Nigeria, a leading telecommunications company. MTN Nigeria has effectively used X to engage with its audience, address customer complaints promptly, and also share updates on its services (MTN Nigeria, 2023). By prioritizing transparency and responsiveness, MTN Nigeria has built a loyal customer base and strengthened its brand equity.

Another example is Dangote Group, a conglomerate with interests in various sectors, including cement production and agriculture. Dangote Group uses Facebook to share stories about its impact on local communities, highlighting its commitment to social responsibility (Dangote Group, 2023). This approach enhances the brand's reputation and fosters a sense of fairness and inclusivity among its audience.

Recommendations Based on the Researchers' view

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are

proposed for brands seeking to enhance their PR strategies on Facebook and X:

1. **Prioritize Transparency:** Be open and honest in your communications. Share updates about your products, services, and any challenges you may face.
2. **Engage Actively:** Respond to comments, messages, and mentions promptly. Show your audience that their opinions matter.
3. **User-Generated Content:** Encourage your followers to share their experiences with your brand and feature their content on your platforms.
4. **Address Crises Swiftly:** Use social media to manage crises in real-time. Issue clear statements and take responsibility where necessary.
5. **Highlight Social Responsibility:** Share stories about your contributions to society. This builds trust and strengthens your brand's reputation.
6. **Conduct Regular Surveys:** Use surveys to gather feedback from your audience and refine your strategies accordingly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, public relations strategies play a crucial role in driving brand awareness on social media platforms like Facebook and X. By applying Equity Theory, brands can create fair and balanced relationships with their audiences, fostering engagement, loyalty, and trust (Adams, 1965). Using the researchers' views and expert opinions, this study demonstrates how perceived fairness influences audience engagement and brand equity. Nigerian brands like MTN Nigeria and Dangote Group are excellent examples of how PR strategies can be effectively implemented to strengthen brand visibility. As competition on social media continues to grow, firms must prioritize fairness and inclusivity in their PR efforts to stand out and succeed.

Now is the Time for Communication to Drive Business Growth from The Boardroom

— Hope Idume-David 

Bio:

Hope is a seasoned professional in public relations and marketing communications, with a proven track record across diverse industries. Her belief that the world is her oyster fuels her drive to achieve anything she sets her mind to. She currently works as a Communications Associate at Mosron Communications where she excels in researching and identifying strategic partnerships for clients, crafting effective strategies to achieve business objectives.



The Success of Every Business hinges on Communication. Now, because communication is embedded in the seemingly mundane tasks responding to emails accurately, positioning the brand logo properly, arranging the boardroom seat layout, writing effective copies, organizing events seamlessly, and maximizing relationships to save the day, it is often overlooked as a key driver for business growth for an organization. However, communication goes beyond these everyday details. It's foundational to how a company connects with internal and external stakeholders.

Interestingly, in 2024, it was projected that employees spent 88% of their workweek

communicating with others in various forms, such as meetings, emails, and calls. What does this mean for business groups? It means that the way an organization communicates—internally with employees and externally with customers, partners, and the public—directly influences its ability to achieve business objectives. It's time to recognize that communication is not just a support function but a strategic driver for growth, innovation, and leadership.

In Nigeria, however, many organizations still keep the communication department backstage, almost as if it's not meant to be at the forefront of business decisions. Often,

communication professionals are left out of the boardroom, where critical business decisions are made. Instead, they are briefed afterwards and expected to carry out activities that align with these decisions. This misalignment creates a disconnect between communication strategies and the core business goals.

But here's the problem:

communication should be present in that boardroom, driving the business objectives rather than merely executing after-the-fact tasks. The communication team is in the best position to shape the narrative, influence stakeholders, and create strategies that resonate with both employees and the market. They should be the ones helping



leadership to translate the business vision into clear, actionable messaging that is consistent, engaging, and impactful.

When communication isn't integrated into decision-making, it's no surprise that the business struggles to communicate its core message effectively. If the communication function remains sidelined, it cannot effectively drive change or support the business growth it's tasked with achieving. It's time to push communication to take its right place at the strategic table. The boardroom needs the communication team not just to relay what's happening but to actively shape what's happening.

Communication has evolved significantly in recent years, and so must the perception of its role in business. It's no longer about just managing the flow of information; it's about actively shaping the business landscape through strategic messaging, brand positioning, and relationship-building.

The most successful companies today recognize that communication is essential in aligning their vision, culture, and customer experience with the core business strategy. Take, for example, a company undergoing a major

transformation. Effective communication is the bridge that ensures the vision is understood and embraced across all levels of the organization. It guides how the company interacts with its customers, ensuring that every touchpoint—whether digital or face-to-face—reflects the brand's mission and values. It builds trust with investors, aligns teams around shared goals, and most importantly, drives business growth through strategic messaging.

When communication is involved in business decisions, the benefits are clear. Here are a few reasons why: **Alignment with Business Goals:** Communication professionals can help translate business strategies into clear and consistent messaging for both internal and external stakeholders. This ensures that the entire organization is aligned with the vision and objectives.

Crisis Management and Risk

Mitigation: A seasoned communication professional can anticipate challenges, address them proactively, and guide the company through crises, safeguarding the brand reputation. The case of Erisco and the tomato paste saga is a brilliant case study. Knowing how to effectively address issues and not letting them escalate to a crisis is possible when

communication is at the top of every piece of information rather than brought in to “magically” repair what should not have been broken in the first place.

Employee Engagement and Culture:

Internal communication is vital to driving a positive company culture and keeping employees engaged. When communication is strategic and authentic, it fosters trust and a sense of belonging, leading to higher productivity and lower turnover.

Customer Trust and Brand Loyalty:

Externally, communication plays a crucial role in building relationships with customers. It's not just about advertising or pushing products; it's about creating a narrative that connects with customers on an emotional level, building long-term loyalty.

Thought Leadership and Innovation:

Communication is the tool that enables businesses to establish themselves as thought leaders in their industries. A clear, consistent message around innovation, expertise, and leadership not only enhances the brand image but also attracts new business opportunities.

For businesses globally, this shift is necessary to stay competitive in an ever-evolving market. If business leaders are serious about driving meaningful outcomes and seeing real ROI from their strategies, the core of any innovative business and leadership transformation lies in getting the right people in the room—specifically, communication professionals.

It's time to recognize that strategic communications need a seat at the boardroom table. Without it, organizations risk missing out on the very insights, strategies, and narratives that can propel them forward. The future of business growth isn't just in the products or services you offer—it's in the story you tell, the relationships you build, and the clarity with which you communicate your vision. And that begins by ensuring communication is a critical part of the decision-making process at the highest level.

Burn Your Marketing Strategy: PR is the Game Changer

— Yvonne Femi Adewumi 

Bio:

Yvonne Femi Adewumi (YFA) is a dynamic communications and marketing professional with a diverse background and a passion for making a difference. As a storyteller, she uses her skills to shape narratives across various platforms, including in her work as a lawyer and a writer. YFA's expertise in communications is built on her experience working with over 20 international and national brands, including KFC Nigeria, Maybelline, Mastercard Foundation, Dark and Lovely, InDrive, Famfa Oil, Sunlight and Nigerian Breweries, among others. Her skills span all spheres of marketing and communications, including media relations, content creation and copywriting, social media management and strategy, public speaking and presentation, crisis communications, brand management, and influencer engagement. Whether she's crafting compelling stories or developing effective communication strategies, YFA is dedicated to helping brands achieve their goals. YFA is currently the Senior Brands and Marketing Manager for Pinnah Foods Limited, the parent company of The Ice Cream Factory and Yin Yang Express.



Marketing has always been about visibility, top of mind awareness and ultimately, leads for sales. Whether it's a small business, a startup, or an established brand, the goal remains the same: getting the product or service in front of the right audience and ensuring they choose you over your competition. In past decades, marketing efforts have focused largely on advertising, promotions, and sales-driven initiatives. However, in today's world, where consumers are more discerning and skeptical than ever, Public Relations (PR) is emerging as a game changer in shaping a brand's reputation and helping to build long-term marketing success.

In today's ever-changing brand

and marketing ecosystem, it's evident that we are in a time where the noise of the market is quite intense and it has become increasingly difficult to stand out. It sometimes feels as though the marketing rule is broken. This is why you see different brands throwing resources at different marketing strategies and not achieving enough results. Everyone is doing digital marketing, influencer marketing, OOH, experiential... all at the same time. In this type of ecosystem, what makes your brand different? What makes it stay at the top of your audience's mind?

The answer is PR! Most often, when we hear PR, what comes to mind is crisis communication or media

relations, but PR is beyond that. PR is a powerful tool that can be used to drive business growth and marketing success if used effectively.

Why? You may ask.

It's quite simple. PR is based on the principle of KLT which is an essential pillar of marketing. KLT simply means Know, Like, Trust. For consumers to patronize your brand, they have to first KNOW you. Once they KNOW you, you take it a step further by getting them to LIKE you. After they like you, it's easier for them to TRUST you and only then, can they BUY from you. PR involves activities and strategies that use the KLT rule; such as content creation, event promotion, reputation monitoring and management, media relations,

market research, and corporate social responsibility. They all serve the purpose of building and increasing brand awareness, driving leads, and ultimately support sales and conversion.

The fact is that people don't want to be sold to all the time. They want to trust the brands they engage with, and this trust isn't built through advertising alone. A glossy ad can spark interest, but real credibility comes from earned media, positive press, authentic storytelling, and brand advocacy. This is where PR thrives, acting as the bridge between what a company does and how the world perceives it. Building a marketing strategy without PR is like trying to light a candle in the wind—it might burn for a moment, but it won't last. PR gives marketing the solid foundation it needs by establishing brand reputation, handling crises, and ensuring that when people search for your company, they find trust, not just promotions.

A good example of the power of PR as a marketing strategy is MTN Nigeria's successful reboot of their brand in 2016. Following a major operational crisis in 2015, which resulted in a \$5.2 billion fine from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), MTN Nigeria's reputation took a hit. However, through a strategic PR campaign, the company was able to restore its

brand reputation and increase its marketing success. The PR campaign, which included a series of events, media outreach, and content creation, helped to reposition MTN Nigeria as a customer-centric brand. The campaign also highlighted the company's commitment to investing in Nigeria's telecommunications infrastructure.

This is why as a branding and marketing expert, it's high time you stop seeing PR as just an add-on to your branding and marketing. It is a core part of the strategy.

Now to the big question: How do you integrate PR into your marketing strategy?

To effectively integrate PR into your marketing strategy, start by identifying your key messaging and storytelling opportunities. Develop a comprehensive PR plan that aligns with your marketing objectives, and leverage media outreach, social media, and influencer partnerships to amplify your brand's voice. Incorporate PR metrics, such as media impressions and social media engagement, into your marketing dashboard to track the impact of PR on your marketing goals. Additionally, consider embedding PR into your content marketing strategy by crafting compelling narratives, hosting events, and leveraging user-generated content

to drive brand awareness and engagement. By incorporating these PR tactics into your marketing mix, you can create a holistic marketing strategy that drives meaningful results and sets your brand apart from the competition.

As Ronn Torossian, a PR expert, once said, "PR is the secret sauce that can make your marketing efforts more effective." At the end of it all, Marketing is about visibility, but PR ensures that visibility translates into trust, influence, and long-term success for the brand. So, if you're forming your marketing strategy and PR isn't a key part of it, you're missing out on the most powerful tool for sustainable growth. A well-executed PR strategy doesn't just sell a product; it builds a narrative, making your brand part of an ongoing conversation that matters to your audience. It amplifies your marketing efforts. It makes sure that when customers think about your industry, your name comes up first, not because you advertised the most, but because you've built credibility, trust, and authority over time.

As a marketing professional, if you've been stuck in a rut with your marketing strategy, it's time to pivot with PR. By leveraging the power of PR, you can increase your top-of-mind awareness, drive marketing and business growth, and ultimately boost your sales.



Evolving Beyond Traditional PR: Embracing Integrated Digital Communications for Nigerian Companies — Ifesinachi Okafor

Bio:

Ifesinachi is a hardworking and diligent individual. She possesses advanced communication, public relations and writing skills. She is result-oriented, committed with a high ability to multitask, learn and solve problems through critical thinking and in-depth understanding of operations to achieve organizational goals. She graduated top 1% of her class with a CGPA of 4.86 from the Department of Mass Communication. She works with Arnergy Solar Limited as a Marketing and Corporate Communications associate.



In today's fast-paced and digitally-driven world, traditional public relations (PR) methods reliant on press releases, events, and media pitching are no longer sufficient to meet the dynamic needs of businesses. For Nigerian companies, this shift presents a unique opportunity to embrace Integrated Digital Communications (IDC) — a modern approach that merges digital marketing, data analytics, and real-time engagement strategies.

IDC not only amplifies brand visibility but also fosters authentic relationships with customers and ensures businesses stay competitive in an increasingly globalized market.

The Critical Gaps in Traditional PR Practices

Traditional PR methods have served businesses well for decades, but their limitations are becoming increasingly evident. They often rely on one-way communication, focusing more on disseminating information than engaging with audiences. This approach does not align with today's audience expectations for interactive, personalized, and real-time communication.

Moreover, traditional PR lacks the precision and measurability of digital tools. For example, while a press release might reach a wide audience, it is difficult to track its impact accurately. Nigerian companies that rely solely on these

outdated methods risk falling behind competitors who leverage digital innovations to engage more effectively with their target audiences.

Why Nigerian Companies Need IDC

Integrated Digital Communications offers a comprehensive solution by combining traditional PR principles with modern digital strategies. Here's why Nigerian businesses should adopt IDC:

- **Enhanced Audience Engagement:** IDC uses social media platforms, email campaigns, and content marketing to engage directly with audiences. These channels allow businesses to create two-way communication, fostering trust and loyalty.



- **Data-Driven Insights:** Digital tools like Google Analytics, social media metrics, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems provide valuable insights into audience behavior. Nigerian companies can use this data to craft more effective and targeted communication strategies.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Digital campaigns often require fewer resources compared to traditional PR efforts, making them a cost-effective solution for companies with limited budgets.
- **Global Reach:** IDC leverages the internet's power to connect with audiences beyond borders, giving Nigerian businesses a competitive edge in global markets.

Case Studies: Success Stories of IDC Adoption

GTBank: Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank) has successfully utilized IDC by integrating social media marketing with traditional PR efforts. Their campaigns, such as the Food and Drink Festival, leverage Instagram and Twitter to engage audiences, which has led to increased customer interaction and brand visibility.

Flutterwave: The Nigerian fintech company has embraced IDC to establish itself as a global player. By combining influencer partnerships, social media campaigns, and thought leadership content, Flutterwave built a strong digital presence and attract international investors.

Dangote Group: The conglomerate's IDC strategy includes leveraging LinkedIn for corporate

communication and YouTube for educational content, showcasing its impact across industries and enhancing its reputation globally.

Actionable Steps for Transitioning to IDC

For Nigerian companies looking to adopt Integrated Digital Communications, the following steps can ensure a smooth transition:

Conduct a Digital Audit: Assess your current PR and digital communication strategies to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Invest in Digital Tools: Acquire tools like Hootsuite for social media management, HubSpot for CRM, and Google Analytics for performance tracking.

Train Your Team: Equip your PR team with digital skills through workshops, online courses, and certifications in digital marketing and analytics.

Develop a Content Strategy: Create a content calendar that aligns with your business goals and focuses on engaging, value-driven content.

Engage in Real-Time

Communication: Use platforms like Twitter and Instagram to interact with your audience in real-time, addressing inquiries, sharing updates, and responding to feedback promptly.

Monitor and Adjust: Regularly evaluate your IDC efforts using data insights and adjust your strategies to optimize performance.

The era of relying solely on traditional PR methods is fading, and adopting the Integrated Digital Communications is no longer optional for Nigerian companies looking to thrive in today's digital landscape. It is a necessity. By addressing the limitations of traditional PR and leveraging IDC's benefits, businesses can enhance brand visibility, foster authentic relationships, and compete effectively globally. The time to evolve is now, and Nigerian companies have every opportunity to lead the charge by embracing this transformative approach.

C-Suite Influence: Unlocking the Power of Strategic PR

— Motola Oyeбанjo



Bio:

Motola Oyeбанjo is an award-winning Strategic Communications Executive. She was listed in the 2022 PR Power List by The Guardian and GLG, the Top 50 Career Women of 2019 by Leading Ladies Africa and in the 100 Leading Women of 2021 by Nigerian Women Annual among others. Motola has been the image maker for several top-tier organizations and senior executives across Africa, the Middle East, UK and beyond. She holds an MBA Degree in Media Leadership from the University of Cumbria UK, a B.Sc. Degree in Economics from the Obafemi Awolowo University Nigeria, a professional certificate in Project Management from the Association for Project Management UK and a professional certificate in Sustainable Business Strategies from Harvard Business School, USA. Motola currently serves as the Regional Communications Director for Africa at Heifer International, a leading international development organisation working in food systems in 20 countries globally. Prior to this, she was Head, Corporate Affairs and Communications, Africa, Middle East, Turkey & Israel at Upfield (now Flora Foods), the largest plant-based consumer products company in the world.



Over two decades, I have witnessed the evolution of public relations (PR) from a tactical function to a strategic and essential need. In the past, Communications and PR expertise was often considered an optional extra. Now, however, organizations increasingly recognize the critical value of bringing PR professionals into key strategic conversations in closer collaboration with other top executives.

I believe this shift is driven by the increasingly complex landscape of stakeholders, each with their own distinct set of needs and interests. Successfully navigating this intricate web requires not just an understanding of each stakeholder group, but also a sophisticated Communications and PR strategy tailored to their specific concerns. The traditional view of PR often

relegates it to a secondary role, focused on generating positive media coverage. While many PR professionals still focus on media placements and press releases, the true power of PR lies in its ability to support the C-suite to achieve business results.

So how can PR transcend tactical execution and become a trusted advisor, shaping corporate narratives and achieving measurable business results? This article explores 5 practical ways, along with real life examples, that show how.

1. The Strategic Shift: Starting with Strategy

Today's organizations and C-suite executives are looking for more than just "buzz." Media visibility and media relations remain an important part of public relations; however, they are just one piece of the puzzle. Business leaders need PR that is strategic and enabling of business objectives, whether that is protecting the organization's license to operate, increasing market share, attracting top talent, or navigating complex regulatory landscapes.

This shift requires PR professionals to think strategically, understand the organization's needs, and demonstrate the tangible value of their work. It means moving beyond impressions and AVE (Advertising Value Equivalency) and embracing PR results that align with business outcomes.

PR in Action: Some time ago, while working with a manufacturing client, we faced government and community leaders' inquiries in a

particular region about their factory's contributions to the local economy. This gap in stakeholder engagement and communication was already affecting business results as its competitor was capitalizing to take away market share. We knew the narrative needed shifting. Our approach was to orchestrate a combined government and community leader delegation visits and media tour. The visits showcased not just the factory's operations, but also the innovative technologies employed, the significant number of local jobs created, and the company's active engagement in community programs. The media tour amplified these positive stories, reaching a wider audience, while also creating a stronger relationship with the media to prevent negative media visibility. This strategic, two-pronged approach built a more positive relationship with the government and community, effectively mitigating the concerns and led to improved business.

2. Speaking the C-Suite's Language: Aligning with Current Business Priorities

To gain influence within the C-suite, PR professionals must understand what keeps executives up at night. What are their top priorities? What are their biggest challenges? How can PR directly contribute to these key business priorities? Instead of making assumptions, taking the time to meet, listen and understand will make a real difference to your PR approach. Typically, these priorities revolve around financial performance (driving revenue growth, profitability, and maximizing



shareholder value), innovation (developing new projects, products and services, expanding into new markets, and staying ahead of the competition), talent management (attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive market), and crisis and reputational management (protecting and enhancing the company's reputation, building trust with stakeholders, and mitigating risks).

PR can play a crucial role in addressing each of these priorities. Whether it is by building brand awareness and positioning the company as a thought leader to drive sales, communicating the company's strategy and financial performance to boost investor confidence, showcasing the company's culture and values to attract top talent or by effectively communicating during crisis situations to protect the company's reputation, there is much that PR can offer.

PR in Action: A bank I worked with, approaching its 100th anniversary, aimed to leverage the celebration to grow its business significantly by modernizing its image for a younger audience while solidifying its corporate and institutional client base. Our PR strategy focused on repositioning the brand through refreshed messaging, honoring its legacy while projecting a forward-thinking vision. We implemented targeted stakeholder engagement, including high-level interactions with the board, shareholders, government and other critical stakeholders across the nation. Celebratory activities spanned all six geo-political zones of the country, reinforcing the bank's national

presence. The PR strategy also focused on catalyzing growth. 40 new, state-of-the-art branches were launched nationwide with high media visibility to emphasize expanding accessibility. New customer propositions specifically targeted at younger demographics, complemented by a cutting-edge mobile banking app were also amplified. This PR strategy achieved desired business results and positioned the bank for continued success.

3. Building Bridges: The Power of Relationships

Strategic and effective public relations is built on trust and strong relationships with key stakeholders, including the organization's leadership, employees across board, investors, board members, government, communities and of course the media. PR professionals must cultivate quality relationships to leverage their influence for the organizations they serve.

PR in Action: Due to a change in government policy, a newly established organization I worked with urgently needed a type of government license without which it would lose about 50% of its business and ability to operate in Africa. They however faced a significant hurdle: low brand awareness, a small business network, and limited recognition among key stakeholders. Our strategy focused on relationship building, rapid visibility and targeted engagement. Leveraging networks, including industry and media associations proved invaluable in navigating the approval process. We partnered with prominent media publications

for quick yet visible brand exposure, showcasing the organization's mission and potential. We secured speaking opportunities for Executives at relevant industry events, putting the organization's leadership directly in front of the right influential figures to network with them. Stakeholder engagements, leveraging relationships, were strategically planned to present our case to crucial stakeholders, including government and private sector partners. This multi-pronged approach resulted in securing the much-needed business license within a critical timeframe.

4. Becoming a Strategic Counsel and Business Advisor:

The key to unlocking C-suite influence is to move beyond tactical execution and become a strategic advisor. This means proactively identifying opportunities and anticipating challenges for the organization and developing the PR strategies to address them. It also means developing compelling narratives and crafting stories that resonate with key stakeholders, communicates the company's value proposition and contributes to long-term growth. Being a strategic advisor also requires PR professionals to provide useful insights that C-Suites will find useful for addressing critical business needs such as emerging trends, topical issues and insights on government, economic or social matters that will impact the organization.

PR in Action: The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented operational challenges for most, if not all, organizations. This included a multinational client I supported which faced cross-border challenges across Africa. Maintaining essential business services while prioritizing employee safety required navigating fluctuating regulations in this global crisis scenario. Our PR strategy hinged on timely access to critical live saving and business essential information. We used active listening and engagement with varied stakeholders to gain valuable insights, and understand evolving

government regulations for health, safety and business. Active participation in industry associations provided additional insights, all of which were made available to the global and regional leadership team to guide informed decision making and quick action for operational continuity and employee protection. Combining real-time information, with strategic partnerships enabled the organization to access insights that helped to maintain operations across borders.

5. Empowering the C-Suite: Amplifying Leadership Presence

One of the most powerful assets that the public relations field brings to the table is empowering business executives as effective communicators. In today's high-visibility environment, strong leadership presence has become a priority. PR professionals equip executives to stand out through

targeted support, starting with media engagement mastery. Public speaking effectiveness and digital presence are equally crucial.

PR in Action: Working with various business leaders, I have seen how developing customized media training covering messaging, Q&A, on-camera presence, and interview navigation, prepares them for media interactions. It also builds their confidence and encourages them to be more proactive in their content development and sharing. PR also assists in developing compelling presentations, refining delivery skills, and fostering audience connection. Coaching support encompasses stage presence, vocal projection, storytelling, and impactful visuals. Beyond presentations, PR supports crafting compelling narratives across various formats like thought leadership pieces, professional correspondence, speeches, presentations and internal

communications. PR also helps build online footprint through strategic social media engagement, optimized LinkedIn profiles, and consistent personal branding. Investing in executive communication amplifies leadership voice, strengthens reputation, attracts partners and investors, and fuels business growth.

On A Final Note:

As the business landscape becomes increasingly complex and communication becomes more critical than ever, the role of PR in business strategy will only continue to grow. PR professionals who embrace strategic thinking, build strong relationships, and demonstrate the tangible value of their work will be the ones who become trusted advisors to the C-suite, unlocking the power of strategic PR to drive business transformation.



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“Internal Clean-Up”: How Internal Processes Can Hamper the Effectiveness of Your PR & Communication Strategies

— Oluwatosin Oladapo 

Bio:

Oluwatosin Oladapo is a Communications Associate with a unique blend of business acumen and creative storytelling. She helps businesses enhance stakeholder engagement and increase brand visibility across African and international platforms.



Even the most brilliant PR strategies can fail when internal processes—the backbone of your organization—silently sabotage your external communication efforts.

The Disconnect That Undermines Your PR Efforts

Picture this: Your marketing team crafts a compelling campaign promising exceptional customer service. Meanwhile, your service delivery department is overwhelmed with backlogged tickets due to outdated approval processes. Your social media team promotes rapid response times, yet internal communication channels remain slow and fragmented. This disconnect doesn't just reduce the

effectiveness of your PR efforts—it actively undermines them, creating a credibility gap that can take years to repair.

Common Internal Challenges That Weaken PR & Communication Strategies

1. **Approval Bureaucracy**
Excessive approval layers can delay time-sensitive communications by days or even weeks, reducing a campaign's impact. In crisis situations, these delays can turn a manageable issue into a full-blown reputation crisis.
2. **Departmental Silos**
When marketing, sales, customer service, and product teams operate in isolation, contradictory messages emerge. Customers notice these inconsistencies, eroding trust in your brand.
3. **Outdated Information Management**
If internal knowledge bases aren't regularly updated, communication teams risk sharing outdated information, damaging credibility.
4. **Misalignment Between Leadership and Execution Teams**
When executives announce initiatives without ensuring implementation teams are

prepared, the gap between what's promised and what's delivered widens dangerously.

5. **Cultural Resistance to Transparency**

Organizations that discourage open discussions about challenges often build communication strategies on shaky foundations, leading to a lack of authenticity.

The Case for "Internal Clean-Up"

Before launching any major communication initiative, organizations must refine the internal processes that ultimately determine its success. What does this look like in practice?

1. **Audit and Streamline Approval Processes**

Review approval chains: Do all seven people really need to sign off on that press release?

Empowering key team members to make decisions within clear guidelines can speed up execution.

2. **Bridge Departmental Divides**

Establish cross-functional communication teams with representatives from different departments to ensure consistent messaging that aligns with operational realities.

3. **Implement Reliable Information Management Systems**

Keep internal knowledge bases current so that communication teams have access to accurate, up-to-date information.

4. **Align Leadership Announcements with Operational Capabilities**

Before announcing new initiatives, confirm that operational teams are ready to deliver. Delaying an

announcement to ensure systems are in place is a small price to pay for credibility.

5. **Foster a Culture of Constructive Transparency**

Encourage teams to surface challenges early. A communication strategy built on honest assessment strengthens trust and enhances brand reputation.

Internal process improvement should not be treated as a separate initiative from communication strategy—it is a prerequisite. No matter how well-crafted your PR efforts are, without internal clean-up, they risk falling apart.

By ensuring your organization can deliver on what it communicates, you transform PR from hopeful messaging into authentic representation. Is your organization ready for this transformation?



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Leading with PR: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities for Growth

— Gemiene Mueni



Bio:

Gemiene Mueni is a PR & Communications consultant passionate about helping remarkable brands tell their stories through media. Her expertise spans Public Relations, Branding, and Communication Services, making her a trusted partner for businesses and individuals seeking to connect with their audiences.



Imagine this: You wake up to a flood of emails, social media backlash, and frantic calls from your team. Your company is trending—but for all the wrong reasons. A single misstep, an unexpected event, or even a misunderstanding has spiraled into a full-blown crisis. What do you do? Do you panic? Do you retreat? Or do you recognize it for what it truly is—a turning point?

A Crisis: Danger or Opportunity?

The ultimate test of public relations is crisis management. Interestingly, both the Chinese term Wei Ji and the Japanese word Kiki—which translate to "crisis"—are composed of two characters: one meaning

danger, the other opportunity. A crisis is a pivotal moment where the choices made determine the consequences.

Reframing Problems: From Disaster to Opportunity

Our perspective on an issue shapes our response. The word problem comes from the Greek problēma, meaning "a thing put forward." This suggests that a crisis is not an irreversible disaster—it is an invitation to act.

Public relations professionals often emphasize that perception is reality. How a crisis is framed—by internal teams, customers, and the media—matters more than the

event itself. Organizations that position a crisis as an opportunity for learning and growth earn more trust than those that try to hide or downplay their challenges.

Take Johnson & Johnson's response to the **1982 Tylenol poisoning crisis**. Instead of shifting blame or downplaying the situation, the company took immediate, transparent action, prioritizing customer safety. As a result, rather than suffering irreparable damage, Johnson & Johnson emerged as a model of corporate responsibility, strengthening consumer trust.

The Psychology of Crisis: Why We Fear, Why We Thrive

In moments of crisis, our brains default to three instinctive responses: fight, flight, or freeze. These survival instincts evolved for physical threats, but modern challenges require a more strategic approach.

Great leaders don't give in to fear or react impulsively. Instead, they combine rational thinking with emotional intelligence, navigating crises with composure and foresight. Neuroscientists have found that uncertainty stimulates cognitive flexibility, pushing us toward innovation. The best leaders recognize this and encourage their teams to adapt rather than retreat.

During the **2008 financial crisis**, Netflix pivoted from a DVD rental model to streaming, reshaping the entertainment industry. Similarly, businesses that embraced digital transformation during **COVID-19** thrived, while those resistant to change struggled.

The Zen of PR: Restoring Balance in Crisis

In Zen philosophy, crisis is not seen as purely negative but as an imbalance—an opportunity for realignment. PR professionals play a crucial role in restoring this balance by guiding organizations toward constructive change.

Three Key PR Strategies for Crisis Management:

1. **Transparency Over Evasion**
Concealing information or deflecting blame only worsens a crisis. Honest communication builds trust. Customers and stakeholders respect organizations that acknowledge mistakes and take corrective action.

Example: Johnson & Johnson's swift and transparent handling of the Tylenol crisis is a textbook

case of how honesty can turn a crisis into a trust-building opportunity.

2. **Framing the Narrative**
A crisis is defined not just by what happens, but by how the story is told. Organizations that control the narrative can turn setbacks into comebacks.
Example: When concerns about **Tesla's battery fires** arose, Elon Musk addressed them head-on. He provided safety statistics, reinforced Tesla's commitment to innovation, and even implemented software updates. Instead of letting the crisis spiral, Tesla repositioned the issue as an opportunity for progress.
3. **Purpose-Driven Action**
Crises reveal weaknesses, but they also provide opportunities to reinforce core values. Organizations that act with

integrity strengthen their reputation.

Example: **Patagonia**, known for its environmental activism, faced backlash when its supply chain was linked to forced labor. Instead of minimizing the issue, the company conducted a public audit, cut ties with unethical suppliers, and strengthened its policies. This response not only mitigated damage but also reinforced Patagonia's mission, earning greater customer loyalty.

Leading Through Crisis

The next time a crisis looms, don't just ask how to survive—ask how to lead through it. Every crisis carries the potential for growth. The opportunity is waiting—will you seize it?



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AI-Driven PR – Transforming Communication for Business Growth

— Dorcas Adeola 

Bio:

Dorcas Adeola is a Brand Marketing and Communications Professional with experience helping businesses across various industries refine their messaging and ensure it resonates across all touchpoints. She specialises in aligning communication strategies with business objectives, reinforcing brand narratives, and driving engagement that leads to measurable growth. Dorcas has successfully guided businesses in strengthening their PR efforts, enhancing brand visibility, and achieving their business goals. She also has an interest in leveraging technology for business growth, exploring solutions to drive brand success in an evolving digital landscape.



Public Relations (PR) is more than media engagement—it is a strategic tool for business growth. Effective PR enhances brand visibility, builds credibility, and fosters strong relationships with customers, investors, and employees.

PR shapes public perception, manages reputational risks, and strengthens brand presence in an increasingly competitive market. Whether for startups or large corporations, PR plays a crucial role in storytelling, crisis management, and brand positioning.

For example, a startup launching a new product may struggle to gain attention. However, with a well-planned PR strategy—including

media coverage, influencer partnerships, and customer testimonials—the brand can generate buzz, leading to higher sales and trust.

For large corporations, PR ensures brand consistency and crisis mitigation. Consider **Apple**: when launching a new iPhone, its PR team aligns media narratives, keynote presentations, and customer engagement with its brand identity. In times of crisis, such as supply chain disruptions, effective PR helps maintain transparency and protect reputation.

The Evolving Role of PR in a Digital Era

Traditional PR strategies—such as issuing press releases and relying on journalists—are no longer enough. Today's consumers expect personalized engagement and real-time responses. If a crisis emerges on social media, companies that fail to react swiftly risk reputational damage.

This is where **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is transforming PR. AI enables businesses to analyze data, track public sentiment, and anticipate challenges before they escalate. It enhances efficiency, improves audience engagement, and strengthens brand reputation.

How AI is Revolutionizing PR

1. AI-Powered Content Creation

AI tools like **Jasper AI** and **Grammarly** assist PR professionals in crafting high-quality content. They generate press releases, blog posts, and social media content while maintaining consistency in tone and messaging.

Example: A PR team launching a campaign can use AI to create multiple variations of a press release tailored for different audiences. AI also suggests keywords and structures that improve visibility in search engines.

2. Real-Time Media Monitoring and Sentiment Analysis

Platforms like **Meltwater**, **Talkwalker**, and **Brandwatch** track brand mentions, media coverage, and public sentiment in real time. These tools analyze

thousands of online conversations, allowing PR teams to gauge public perception and react proactively.

Example: A company launching a sustainability campaign can use AI to monitor social media reactions, distinguishing between positive and negative comments. If negative sentiment spikes, the PR team can adjust messaging or address concerns immediately.

3. AI Chatbots for Stakeholder Engagement

AI chatbots enhance PR efforts by handling media inquiries, responding to customer concerns, and ensuring brand consistency in communication.

Example: An airline facing customer service issues can deploy an AI chatbot to provide real-time updates on

flight delays, reducing frustration and improving brand perception.

4. Crisis Prediction and Risk Mitigation

AI tools like **Signal AI** and **Crisp Thinking** help predict potential PR crises by analyzing online conversations and historical data. Businesses can proactively manage reputation risks before they escalate.

Example: A company noticing a sudden rise in negative sentiment towards its product can take corrective action before the issue turns into a full-blown crisis. This proactive approach protects the brand and maintains customer trust.

AI-Driven PR: The Competitive Advantage

AI is not replacing PR professionals—it is empowering them with data-driven insights,

automation, and enhanced engagement tools. Businesses that integrate AI into their PR strategies gain a competitive edge by:

- Responding to crises faster
- Personalizing customer interactions
- Optimizing PR campaigns with real-time analytics

In contrast, companies that ignore AI risk falling behind in today's digital world.

The Future of PR is AI-Driven

PR remains a key driver of business growth. AI is revolutionizing how brands communicate, manage crises, and build relationships. Companies that embrace AI-powered PR strategies will see stronger brand positioning, improved audience engagement, and sustained business success.

The future of PR is AI-driven—businesses that adapt will thrive.



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