

6<sup>TH</sup> SME GHANA AWARDS

# Ovodafone SMEGA 118



| THURSDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019 | | ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER |

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# Goodwill Message

We live in interesting times. With every passing year, the dynamic changes in the business and economic landscape tell a growth story. This has always been made possible, in Ghana, by the Small and Medium **Enterprises (SMEs). Every** SME has the power to succeed if they are equipped with the right resources to connect, grow and prosper in their businesses through reliable relationships and partnerships.

Over the years, we have supported many businesses to achieve tremendous success in their spheres of influence. This year, once, again, we are excited to be considered a brand partner of the SME Ghana Awards. Our association with this platform comes on the wings of our declaration of September as SME month. This year, apart from this event, we have also outlined a number of significant activities, including SME/CEIBS Masterclass, market storms, trade festivals and other regional engagements, to empower SMEs.

The Ghanaian economy is still experiencing uncertainty due to continuous imbalances and challenges in the financial services sector. Immense pressure is mounting on key regulators of the country's businesses as they grapple with issues of corporate governance and profitability. I will urge players and owners in the SME space to be aware of and understand the pressing demands of today's hyperconnected workforce and be prepared to adapt to new and more dynamic ways of working. Connectivity; superfast internet and the increasing importance of mobile devices have become the tools for the modern workplace; transforming and bringing a new dynamism to the way we work and interact. SMEs need to be confident in confronting these trends and embracing them if they are to survive.

There is no doubt that SMEs are change makers; they constantly require support and empowerment to embrace the digital future successfully. Vodafone is always ready at all times to engage new businesses on what is required to become ready for the digital future. We are here to support you at every stage of your journey by fashioning out unique and innovative telecommunication solutions that empower you to grow and prosper.

Thank you once again and congratulations to all the winners! Well done.



Alfred Nkrow Ag. Director, Vodafone Business

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## SMEGA'18 PROGRAMME

Arrival of (	Guest and Cultural Performance										
Refreshment, Red Carpet and Networking Guest Seated Opening Prayer Welcome Address – SMEGA											
						Introductions/Acknowledgments					
						Interlude	- Cultural Performance	6:40			
						First set of	Speeches				
	- Activa International Insurance Limited - Drum Appellation	6:45									
	- International Trade Council	6:50									
Interlude	- Inspiration (Spoken Word)	6:55									
	- Friends of Music Ghana	7:00									
First Set o	f Award Presentations	7:10									
Second Se	t of Speeches										
	- Vodafone and Launching of MasterClas - Drum Appellation	s 7:40									
	- Ministry of Trade and Industry	8:00									
Interlude	- The Stakeholder Engagement	8:05									
	- Cultural Performance	8:15									
	- Guest of Honour (Key Note Address)	8:20									
	- Cultural Performance										
Second Set of Award Presentations											
Announcements / Appreciations and Closing Prayer											
Refreshme	nt / Networking / Departure	9:45									

# THE GHANAIAN COMPANION

In her physiology of taste, Anthelme Brillat posits: "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are." This resonates with the assertion that, we may live without Poetry, Music and Art; we may live without conscience, and live without heart! We may even live without friends and without books, but no civilized Ghanaian I dare say can live without maize.

The highly acclaimed staple is documented as the most important cereal the world over, with a variety of use across the economic divide. It's widely used for animal feed and industrial raw material in the developed countries whilst developing countries generally use it for food.

There is no denying the prominent role played by this staple crop in the diets of the whole world particularly in our part of the world, where the crop is put to diverse use and nothing about it goes waste. It's for instance the most grown crop in the United States which produced 32 percent of the world's corn in 2010 – making that country –as always – the global leader in Maize production with China coming second.

In Ghana – as pertains in India, Uganda and other parts of the world – the staple crop is the most important cereal produced and consumed by every Tom-Dick-and Harry, accounting for more than 50 percent of the country's total cereal production. Maize is the second largest commodity crop in Ghana after cocoa and is thus crucial for our country's agricultural sector for food security.

Our Mole Dagbon brothers from the Northern part of Ghana always take their Tuo Zaafi for lunch; the Akans particularly our Fante folks, never forget to gormandize Fante dokonu which is the Number One companion of our students in boarding houses who will never let go Marshkey (mashed kenkey). My people, the Ga Adangmes from the capital of Ghana prefer to swag up with Ga Korm (thus Ga kenkey), a very popular food in the southern part of Ghana and their traditional festive food Kpokpoi during the Homowo festival. The Ewe's from the Volta region, use maize for Akple, Ewokple, Kaaklo, Abolo, and Djenkple. These meals are eaten at all times of the day but mostly preferred for lunch and supper.

Notwithstanding the instrumentality of Maize in our scheme of ensuring food security, it's worrying to note that, current shortfalls in domestic production and demand for this staple crop is likely to remain a high of 267, 000 metric tons until the end of 2015 if novel and pragmatic measures are not adopted by our policy makers to tackle the colossal gap between our domestic production and consumption.

Is it not perplexing that, serious business like maize production in Ghana is left in the hands of predominantly poor illiterates in our hinterlands who have kept to the status quo of using antiquated tools and methods for modern farming? It therefore came to me as no surprise when the Global Food Security index – which indicates assessment of food affordability, availability and quality recently ranked Ghana 68th out of 105 countries captured surveyed and placed the country 43 out of 100 where 100 is supposed to be the most favorable index.

In order not to call "spade" a spoon, let's all admit the emerging picture from current global trends indicates that, the average maize yield in Ghana remains one of the lowest in the world, much lower than the average for sub-Saharan Africa and also lower than yields achieved in similar lowland, rain-fed Tropical environments in Thailand and Southern Mexico. Our yields have thus been growing by a mere one percent annually.

With such a performance in maize production, the poultry industry bears the greatest brunt in the sense that; they have to import expensive yellow corn to feed their fowls due to the inability of the agric sector to meet that demand locally – not to mention other repercussions such as the obvious employment which stares most of our youths in the face.

Does it not unnerve you that in spite of the large tracts of low cost fertile land, growing domestic demand on maize, significant water resources for agricultural production, political stability, enabling business environment and relatively low cost of labor for farm operations, Ghana still imports maize to supplement domestic consumption? The implication is that we are stagnating in commercial maize production. Ghana is capable of leading the exportation of maize - at least in the sub region – through the use of modern technology and rigorous investment in the production of maize.

Let's nip unemployment and poverty in the bud by ending maize importation and turning around our economy.



# We are grateful to all Sponsors, Parteners and all our Patrons for your loyalty.

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HANA A

Congratulations to all Participants, Nominees and ultimate Winners of this year's awards.

We wish you all the best in your business endeavours as you work towards **SMEGA 7**.

#### Long live the SME GHANA AWARDS,

Long live MSMEs,

Long live our SPONSORS AND PARTNERS,

Long live GHANA!



The SME Ghana Awards - SMEGA - is an initiative of **Imagine8** imagine8 company limited | Tel: +233 (0) 24 4462536 | 050 641 8039 | spider.imagine8@gmail.com Office Location: Block 11, Room 1, Mensa Saba Road, Kokomlemle – Accra

# TESTIMONIALS from SMEGAWINNERS

#### FRANCIS ALUMINIUM

So someone visited my workplace from SMEGA and we had a chat, he went through my books and also undertake some physical inspection of my factory. I obliged. I couldn't consider myself a possible winner after the processes.

I was called few weeks later for an interview in Accra where I met an entirely new set of gentlemen who again asked me questions about my business. I couldn't imagine a business in faraway Ashanti Region could emerge a winner looking at the other businesses competing.

Im fact, it came as a surprise when my company (Francis Aluminium) emerged as a winner in a category. I was blown away.

Within eight (8) months of winning the award, my business began to see a lot of remarkable improvement. Through the awards we won, **a** supplier in India who we have been trying to engage without any success, suddenly gained trust in us. This supplier offered to supply us products on a very flexible credit arrangement and this has enabled us to meet our production target and satisfy our market.

SMEGA is one award scheme that doesn't run on whom you know basis. If you are well deserving of an award under SMEGA, you will be acknowledged.

#### QUARMA FOODS

I was motivated to join SMEGA simply because of its tag line, "... celebrating Ghana's SME's".

My distribution network became wider just by the recognition SMEGA gave me. Apart from distribution, Quarma suddenly became visible to investors. SMEGA nominated Quarma Foods as part of SME's competing for the **"Company of the Future"** in the **"Ghana Club 100 Awards"** by GIPC and surprising, we came up second.

The SMEGA awards, ignited a new sense of commitment and motivation amongst my staff because now they know the world is watching and appreciating their efforts. The training I have received from SMEGA has made me improve on my operations as well as my branding and packaging for YoFresh Yogurt. SMEGA helped me develop a nutritional profile and barcode, setting me up for export in the not very far future.

Without knowing anybody on the SMEGA team or paying any money, **Quarma Foods** was adjudged the Overall Best SME and I couldn't hide my joy. However, what really got my attention was the sincerity and transparent system SMEGA employs under its scheme. I have always thought that, to be recognized in an awards, you need to grease the palms of the organizers but with SMEGA, we didn't have even the slightest clue that a company which was just about three (3) years in operation could emerge an overall winner.

#### **NOVA WELLNESS CENTRE**

SMEGA is the first award I have ever received and my business has seen a lot of transformation as a result of SMEGA. As part of the prize package, VODAFONE GHANA, took us through a capacity building program with China Europe International Business School (CEIBS). Through this training, our numbers have doubled in

relation to staff strength, clients, machinery and income.

SMEGA, unlike other award schemes, gives you valuable training and access to pitch your business to investors both locally and international. This is one unique aspect of SMEGA that makes my win invaluable.

# 5 KEYS TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH

Author: Francis Sabutey is a top-notch blogger, SEO expert and CEO of Think Expand Ltd.

A lot of companies want to grow their businesses, but only a few know how to get the job done. There are some companies who are doing well in growing their businesses, but the growth is not sustainable. Just pursuing growth for growth sake is not worth it. What you want to do for your company is to drive the company into a trajectory of consistent business growth over a period of three, five, tens years and beyond.

And you see, the fact is that you can't stay at one place. Your business is either growing or dying! Pat Riley, the famous basketball coach said, "You're either getting better or getting worse." If you don't intentional action to grow your business, it's not going to happen.

You have to decide to grow your business over a period of time using some parameters and commit yourself to take the right decision to grow. The following are some of the decisions or things you need to do to achieve consistent business growth:

#### 1. A strong top-level leadership

This is a challenge in many businesses. The entrepreneurs who founded the company aren't able to grow and lift the company to the next level because they lack the leadership capital and capability to steer the next level growth. They maintain the status quo, rather than challenge the status quo.

To take your business to the next level, you need to start thinking of bringing top-level managers

to handle small divisions and operations. Divide your services into subunits and consider raising divisional managers to take over each operation. Instead of micromanaging all aspect of the company, think of how you can leverage competent managers to take charge of the operation.

2. A strong operational team If you start from the top, then each divisional manager will begin the

next process of training existing team members to perform better or eliminating ineffective team members out of the company. People are the most important asset of a company and so, you need the right team to take the company to the next level.

Consider selecting teams based on alignment with organizational values, cultures and objectives of the company. You're not looking for people who will occupy positions. You're looking for people who will deliver in their positions. All team performance must be evaluated regularly to ensure it meets the required standard to achieve the projected business growth.

#### 3. A strong business model

First, you need to consider reinventing your business model or completely changing the entire business model to match up with the intended growth of the company. This activity should start with meeting with the top-level leaders of the company to develop a strategic plan for the company. The leadership team should think long term and consider who they would grow the company in the next five to ten years. This strategic plan should state a clear business model that will enable the company to generate more income, reduce operational costs and increase net profits from year to year. The team should also consider how to reinvest profits to skyrocket and supplement the traditional income of the company. Reinventing the business plan means that the operations of the company must be redesigned to be efficient and effective in delivering expected results.

#### 4. Refocusing on the right customer base

The purpose of a business is to generate customers and keep them. Without customers, you have no business. The idea is to focus on the right customers that can enhance and grow the company. According to the Pareto Principle, 20% of your customers will contribute to 80% of your result. That means focusing on the top 20% of your customers and looking for the same type and kind of customers like them will skyrocket your profits.

Analyze your customer bases and evaluate the top 20% of your customers that are bringing most of your sales and revenue. Conduct a brainstorming section with your leadership team on how you can get more of those customers. If your company is focused on serving businesses. Then, how can you get sustainable businesses will require your services/products on a regular basis to provide robust cash flow for your business?

**5. Strengthening Operational Efficiency** Customers don't really care about you. They care about themselves. What they want is a company or an organization that will take care of their needs and serve them in the best way possible for the lowest cost. If your company can do this repeatedly, success and growth are assured. Therefore, the focus should be on how you can improve your operational efficiency to deliver groundbreaking and outstanding service.

How do you design your manufacturing or service delivery system to serve customers better and faster? How do you redesign your workplace and related culture to support the growth of your desire? What tools and equipment do you need to grow? How much growth capital do you need to invest to get to the next of growth? What will the capital be used for and what will be the return on investment (ROI) of the investors/creditors?

How do you plan on raising the funds needed to growth? Do you have the required accounting and financial management system to ensure profit from growth are retained and invested to grow the business further? What corporate policies and values do you have in place to ensure that all people and systems function effectively?

Is your business well systematized enough to be scaled or grown to the next level? What is the status or quality standard of your product/ service from the customer's perspective? What are people saying about your brand and product/service? How do you increase brand exposure? All these things must be considered if you are looking to grow your company.

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#### SIGNIFICANCE OF **PACKAGING INNOVATION** IN GLOBAL TRADE Kofi Essuman - GS1 Ghana

Trade which involves the movement of goods from the source of production to the point

of consumption, plays a critical role in the level of prosperity in a country because it creates job opportunities and higher-earnings for many people. Trade contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of countries and is a reflection of the level of economic development. A comparison of 'developed', 'developing' and'under-developed' countries



reveals that countries with a high level of trade tend to be more prosperous than countries with limited trade opportunities.

Ghana experienced significant GDP growth between 2007 and 2017. This can be attributed to an increase in merchandise export from US\$5.27 Billion in 2007 to US\$13.84 Billion in 2017. However the composition of Ghana's merchandise exports has not experienced significant change over the last decade. Ghana continues to export primary commodities dominated by gold, crude oil, unprocessed/semi processed agricultural products, aluminum, ores, rubber and rubber products accounting for over 90% of total export earnings.

Ghana's potential to increase foreign exchange earnings by adding value to traditional and nontraditional exports such as cocoa products, tuna, cashew nuts, horticultural products (pineapples, and bananas), oil seeds (palm oil, shea nuts), handicrafts and textiles is well known. Value addition will enable Ghana to benefit from international trade facilities such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), EU-ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the recent African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). A product has little value and cannot be traded profitably unless it is delivered to the final

> customer unspoiled, undamaged and functional for its intended purpose. Packaging performs this role by containing and protecting products, facilitating distribution, handling and sale as well as providing convenience during use. Packaging thus creates value and enhances economic growth by facilitating merchandise trade. An effective packaging system is

therefore a pre-requisite for efficient production, distribution and marketing of goods.

Packaging, including today's modern shipping container, has contributed significantly to the growth and transformation that has occurred in global trade in the last 50 years. Packaging has had massive impact in production and distribution across a wide range of industries such as food and drink, healthcare, cosmetics, and other consumer goods. Packaging also facilitates handling of a wide range of industrial goods and agricultural commodities.

The continued dominance of primary commodities in Ghana's foreign trade and the difficulties in export competitiveness of many Ghanaian SMEs can be partly attributed to ineffective packaging. Even though the sector has witnessed significant progress locally over the past two decades, a cursory review reveals several challenges including the following -

- More than 80% of raw materials used in the production of packaging is imported
- Conversion machines, equipment and accessories are imported
- Weak technical support (spare parts, expertise) to maintain/repair often resulting in long downtimes
- The local packaging industry is heavily focussed on plastics

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- Limited investment in new technologies and innovation
- No well-equipped package testing, development and structural design laboratories
- Local packaging tends to be expensive compared to imports from China and the Far East
- Increasing trend of contract packing consumer goods overseas particularly China
- Non-conformance to international standards, trade regulations and buyer's requirements therefore cannot compete globally.
- A fragmented sector, limited interaction among players
- Absence of a clear national packaging policy
- Negative perception of packaging as a nuisance due to poor management of plastic waste.

Ghana has witnessed increasing urbanization, modem consumerism and a growing middle class over the past two decades. These developments have led to vast demographic changes and an increase in the consumption of fast moving consumer goods. Urban populations are eatingon-the-go and looking for convenient packaging options in line with urban lifestyles.

Reducing food losses and waste and seeking ways to address the needs of a growing and rapidly urbanizing population at minimum cost have become a challenge that offers opportunities for growth and innovation in the packaging industry. Packaging innovation is therefore becoming increasingly important globally to make it possible for food as well as many other consumer goods to transition long distances through the value chain to end consumers with an enhanced product safety, appeal, longer shelf life and contribution to reduction of food waste and loss. The growth of shopping malls and supermarkets in Ghana in recent years also presents an opportunity for increased trade.

In the coming years converters and brand owners especially small and medium scale enterprises will need to adopt innovative packaging for the local and export market. This will include -

Better containers such as plastic crates

rather than wood to reduce post-harvest loss of fresh produce

- Packaging for new distribution channels such as online trading
- Smart and intelligent packaging to fight counterfeit products
- Packaging with improved barrier properties for longer shelf life
- Packaging with outstanding shelf appeal for modern trade (supermakets and shopping malls)
- Sustainable packaging such as alternatives for single use plastics and effective management of post-consumer plastic waste.

To be successful with the introduction of packaging innovation one needs to observe and study customers' needs, discover problem areas, address affordability vis a vis value-addition and then work backwards to develop or adopt relevant packaging. For the industry be able to deliver relevant innovative packaging a number of factors will be required -

- A national policy framework and incentives to drive investment and encourage innovation in packaging
- Partnerships and collaboration for technology transfer
- Training to build the capacity of packaging professionals
- A packaging innovation centre as the hub to support industry
- A directory of packaging resources, publications, participation in exhibitions, a professional packaging group.
- Compliace with packaging standards by converters and manufacturers

Packaging facilitates trade by making the movement of goods between countries more effective and efficient to meet the needs of rapidly growing world populations everywhere. Ghana is a net importer of consumer goods with huge negative impact on foreign exchange earnings. This situation can be reversed by a conscious effort to build a strong industrial base in innovative packaging to increase local production of consumer goods, drive export of value added goods, create choice, keep costs down, boost the economy and create employment.



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# **SUCCESSION PLANNING** FOR SMALL & MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

If you're in business for the long term, then succession planning must be one of your top priority. When business is afloat, cash is flowing and everything is working very well, many CEOs and business managers tend to forget the idea of succession planning. They just hope things will keep on moving well and cash will keep flowing, then suddenly the unexpected happens. What's that?

The CEO or a top-level manager falls sick and has been rushed to the hospital. That's bad news, right? But just wait for a little! The doctor says that the situation is worse and it will take about three to six months before everything will be fine.

We all know the manager is a key player in the success of the booming business. If the manager has been hospitalized, then it ironically means that business success has also been hospitalized. So what happens? Management can't find a good replacement and this begins to affect the success of the business.

You see, these things happen all the time. It is not always a sickness. Sometimes, it can be sudden death, shocking resignation and surprising misfortunes. To ensure your business keeps on doing well in good and bad times, even after you're dead and goon, you must start practising succession planning now!

#### What's succession planning?

In a layman's language, succession planning is a process of identifying and developing new leaders who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die. Succession planning ensures that more capable team players are readily available to take the business to the next level. Therefore, it prevents void in a business when the unexpected happens.

There are many business owners who think that they don't need succession planning now. They think they probably need it in the future. But, that's just kidding yourself and risking your business. Succession planning is like insurance. You might not need it when everything is okay, but when things turn from bad to worse and worse to worst, that's when you'll seriously need succession planning for your business.

#### How to Engage in Succession Planning

This is the time to start thinking about putting structures for your business so that your business can keep moving onward and forward, even in the face of challenges. Thus, let's get started with how you can start developing a succession planning program for your business.

#### Access the talent structure of your business

The most important resource in your business is people. The talents, skills and expertise of your people are what drives the profitability of your business. Therefore, the very first step is to analyze and access the corporate structure of your business. How many workers do you have in your business? What do these people do? Who reports to who? Do you have an organizational structure in place? Just look at how your team relates with each to get things done in your company.

#### Identify the service areas of each position

To every position in your company, there are tasks. The person who occupies the position must have the skills, qualities and competence to get the job done. So what you have to do is to write down the service areas/job description of each accountability or position. Make a list of what each position needs to be doing to make function effectively for business growth.

#### Identify the ethics and policies related to that service area

You know that some people may have the skills to do the work, but they don't have the ethics and values to adhere to the policies related to that position. That means even though they can do the job, they might not be a good fit for your company. Because of this, make a list of a set of behaviours, ethics and policies that the person occupying that position needs to have.

## • Develop a position contract for that role in your company.

Now, you have identified the job descriptions, ethics, values and qualifications of the person to occupy the position. That's a great job! What you need to do next is to develop a well-written position contract for that role in your company and print it. Develop a print out of all that the person needs to do, have and achieve for that position and the company as a whole.

#### Run and internal and external recruitment program

This is the time for the hunt! You have to begin searching for people who can occupy that position. It shouldn't be hard this time around because you are absolutely clear about what the personality and position entail. How do you recruit the right person? Start from internal search and then move outside when you don't find the right candidate to fill the position within the company.

The challenge with outside people is that they are new to your corporate culture, philosophy and way of doing business. Your old staff already knows how things work. What they need is just grooming to fit into the next role in the company.

#### Interview and select the best candidate for training & development

Organize an interview and select the best candidate for the position. When you are doing the interview, use your position contract document to guide you to find the best candidate for the position. Ask questions that will help you know whether the person fits the position are planning for. After the interview, proceed with a training and development program to groom the person to occupy that position.

#### Delegate and evaluate progress

Once the person is ready to get started, just delegate the position. That's the person's formal appointment to function in the underlying position. The appointment should always come after careful interview, training and development. Don't delegate people to occupy positions that they're ill-equipped in. That will sabotage the progress of your business. After you delegate, you need to review and evaluate the person to ensure things are done excellently. All these things take time and that's why you have to start succession planning before you even need it.

#### **Francis Sabutey**



# A WORLD OF **Experience**







PUM Netherlands senior experts is a volunteer organization committed to the sustainable development of small and medium-size enterprises in developing countries and emerging markets. We offer practical expertise within the most important sectors of the economy, targeting specific issues in a company's performance. We focus on transferring knowledge, which is not available locally, to entrepreneurs in developing countries.

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We support SME's in over 35 sectors in the economy, in the areas of Trade & Industry, Services, Health & Environment and Food security. For an overview of the sectors that we are active in, please see https://www.pum.nl/ how-we-work/sectors

#### Expertise | PUM Netherlands senior experts www.pum.nl

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# OWN YOUR SPACE

The nature of doing business today has been hit by a technological revolution, setting into course a phenomenon that allows hundreds of thousands of people to get connected. This revolution, has given birth to a new form of media communication which has reduced the relevance of traditional media. This new media is what has come to be known today as, "Social Media".

Social Media, has made it possible for people to connect to each other using their own preferences, thus; you can actually reach the right audience through the tab of a finger. It is therefore not an exaggeration when they say, it's the best time to migrate your onsite business online and own your space.

As much as social media is a platform where people interact, share ideas, create awareness, have discourse on matters relating to their immediate society or international concerns, businesses shouldn't lose sight of the fact that these huge virtual numbers are everyday ordinary people. It is therefore imperative that entrepreneurs, business owners and the business world come to understand the value social media plays in attracting the right audience, clients, partners and stakeholders.

The various social media platforms that businesses can take advantage of are; WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram,

Twitter, LinkedIn. According to Khoros.com, 37% of the world population, made up of 2.8billion everyday people, use social media. Facebook has 2 billion active users visiting the platform every month. Instagram has 800 million active users with 500 million of these being daily active users. 317 million active users visit the twitter platform every month and 106 million active users monthly visit LinkedIn. Forbes through a research, discovered that in 2018, 30% of retail shoppers, actual made a purchase after discovering a new product on Facebook. If this is anything to go by, then today's entrepreneur and business owner needs to know that social media is the new marketplace with an unlimited reach.

To benefit from the full potentials of social media, businesses need to engage strategically in branding and advertisement.

#### **Branding & Advertising**

Social media is a great place to build and promote a brand to attract the right followers (audience). All you need to do is engage a social marketing team with a designer to develop a monthly, quarterly or annual content plan and have this plan executed per schedule. You can actually monitor your performance by paying attention to the rate of engagements you receive on a post. Advertising on social media is fairly inexpensive as compared to traditional media and one can actually determine the demography of audience they want to reach.

#### **Choose Your Demography for Paid Advertising**

One challenge that discourages entrepreneurs and business owners from investing in media advertising is the surety that their paid adverts will reach the right audience. Fortunately, with social media there is an available setting that allows you to narrow in your demography to the right audience with preferences to age, sex, marital status, geography, income level, taste, interest, culture, nationality and more. You are therefore assured of having your communication material reaching the very users it is intended for. As a business owner, this obviously takes a major hurdle out of the way in promoting your products and services online.

Once you have chosen your demography you have the advantage of building a strong relationship with the followers you derive.

#### **Building a strong followership**

5.6million active users all have one thing in common. They are attracted to one type of content or the other. With a well-developed content plan, created with your business in mind, you should be able to attract users who overtime become followers. The content you provide, builds a bond between you and your followers who graduate from followers to actually becoming a part of your business clientele. For example, if you run a restaurant business, you should develop a content around healthy eating or nutrition as part of your daily post in addition to your daily menu post. Followers become informed about right eating habits through your page whilst being exposed to your daily menu and the more you engage them, a reasonable ratio will translate into regular clients.

To be able to translate the followers into clients, requires you to set up a market place.

#### Setting Up A market place

The demography and weekly page reports, allows you to assess your followers and thus design a strategy that meets the exact needs of your followers. Setting up a marketplace includes, creating an online shop, engaging correspondents and a delivery system that is efficient.

Interestingly, feedback and reviews is a vital aspect of business that entrepreneurs look out for in order to improve their products and services and social media readily makes it available.

#### Receiving and responding to feedback/ reviews

Social media is the right place to receive feedback and reviews from your products through the comments sections. Users of social media are known to be more expressive than in real life. For a business owner, this means you can actually evaluate yourself on the go by the repeat purchases, recommendations, rejections, complains and expectations that were met or not met.

As much as happenings on social media makes it unpopular, the focus on every business owner and entrepreneur is on the huge traffic social media generates. The future of doing business is on the virtual space, and you need to OWN YOUR SPACE.

#### By Atsu Mawuli



WWW.TRADECOUNCIL.ORG

#### THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE COUNCIL BY THE NUMBERS

The International Trade Council is a 64-year-old peak body Chamber of Commerce representing government export agencies, chambers of commerce and industry associations and businesses from 176 countries.

# 19 58 73 314 28,859

#### NATIONAL CHAMBERS

There are 19 national chambers of commerce members representing the business interests of more than 8.8 million organizations.

#### STATE CHAMBERS

There are 59 state chambers of commerce members representing 478,000 businesses, non-profits and community organizations.

#### **GOVERNMENT TRADE AGENCIES**

There are 73 government trade agency members of the Council. This includes national, sector specific, regional and district export agencies representing more than 42 million businesses.

#### LOCAL CHAMBERS & SPECIALIST INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

There are 314 local chambers of commerce and specialist industry organization Council members, working on behalf of approximately 3.6 million associations, businesses, think-tanks, non-profits and community organizations.

#### **CORPORATE MEMBERS**

The Council directly represents 28,859 businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions with approximately 4.9 million employees. Council members range from sole traders and local businesses to international conglomerates.

#### WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

From peer-to-peer networking events to professional development sessions, from business leader round-tables to policy committees, the International Trade Council offers your business plenty of opportunities to get involved in activities that will allow you to grow your network and grow professionally.

- 1. When you become a member of the Council you will have access to some of the most powerful, successful and influential business people in a variety of sectors.
- 2. Because businesses that participate in the Council promote each other and work together, your own business can grow and prosper quickly.
- 3. You'll also see a valuable return on your investment through Council cost savings programs and member discounts, opportunities for volunteerism, sponsorships, and exposure through Council media and events.

Membership in the International Trade Council is an investment in the future of your business.

#### BENEFITS FOR YOUR SALES & MARKETING TEAMS

#### Free Lead Generation Service

Council staff can create a targeted list of potential prospects in your specific niche.

The Council manages an in-house database of over 20 million C-level contacts from 179 countries. Using this data, the Council can build you a custom contact list of leads using over 10 criteria, including job title, location, industry, company size and skills.

Data is provided to you in Excel format and, using this information, your sales team can tailor their outreach to connect with the right contacts every time.

#### Free Qualified Business Introductions

The Council can help you meet your next client or alliance partner by arranging 1:1 business introductions.

Council staff can help you minimise business risks by connecting you to trustworthy and knowledgeable people, including other International Trade Council Members and members of our partner organizations.

All you need to do is tell Council staff the industries of companies you are looking to meet, and the job title(s) your typical buyer/partner and they will do the rest.

#### Free Overseas Market Introduction Services

The Council is committed to assist exporters in the development of new markets through the provision of a range of free and paid services.

- Business introductions to clients in appropriate target industries
- Appointment setting
- International trade statistics and summary analysis of
- market trendsPress release distribution
- Introduction to appropriate trade-show organisers
- Assistance with setting up a breakfast and/or lunch meeting for potential partners
- Provision of letters of support for business travel visas
- Marketing and business planning templates
- Introduction to free local mentors
- Logistics, legal, human resources and accounting advice (up to 2 hours free in each market)

#### Free Advertising

- Listing in the accredited supplier directory
- Up to 4 weeks of banner advertising on the ITC website\*
- Listing in the PDF directory and procurement guides
- Up to 5 advertisements in the ITC email newsletter\*
- Up to 5 event broadcasts in the ITC email newsletter, social networks and website\*
- Unlimited promotion of your special deal to Council members (contact us for a customised solution)
- Up to 12 social media broadcasts of your latest news per month

#### Free Market Intelligence

The Council can provide you with free customized reports by HS Code for goods imported / exported across 179 countries.

- Value exported in the past year
- Quantity exported in the past year
- Average unit value (per customs declarations)
- Growth over the past 5 years
- Average tariffs
- Major importers
- Local competitors

#### Free Press Release Distribution

No matter what industry you're in and no matter how small or big your company is, you can benefit from sending the Council your articles and press releases.

Press releases and educational articles can establish you as an industry expert. This helps you gain the trust of your customers and once they trust you they're likelier to buy from you. But being an expert is also good for media relations. Whenever the media needs someone to comment on a story related to your industry, you want to be the one they call on.

The Council can publish your press release on its website, social media networks and in the Council newsletter.

We can also distribute articles of interest to third party media outlets for their addition.

#### **BENEFITS FOR YOUR HR DEPARTMENT**

#### Free Unlimited Training for Your Staff

Enrol as many of your employees as you want at no extra cost Take as many courses as you want

Complete the courses from your home or office

Everything employees need to complete the course, including videos, further readings, assessments, quizzes, transcripts and their classmates are accessed in a single, easy-to-use online classroom.

Courses require approximately 2-4 hours study per week but can vary depending on the student.

All courses are 4 weeks in length (16 hours maximum) except Public Private Procurement which is 13 weeks - (roughly 30 hours of study time).

#### Free Human Resources Assistance and Advice

If dealing with employment issues is becoming increasingly difficult, time consuming and costly for your organization then the Council can offer you access to a wide range of specialist, global, HR support.

#### Unlimited consultation via email or phone for assistance with day-to-day questions at no cost to your organization.

Where more in-depth, bespoke consultancy support is required, the Council provides immediate access to a local, quality assured and experienced HR experts in 76 countries. Consultants can advise on a particular project, cover an interim vacancy or act as a retained service for HR support and management.

#### Free Regular Online Webinars and Seminars

Throughout the year the Council conducts a range of free business online workshops and seminars (Webinars) covering a broad range of topics including: sales, finance, human resources management, marketing, mediation, legislative issues, trade barriers, intellectual property and more.

Notifications of upcoming Webinars are sent via email to all Council members.

Online courses currently available:

- Agriculture and the World We Live In
- Becoming a Confident Trainer
- Big Data for Better Performance
- Diagnosing the Financial Health of a Business
- Entrepreneurship and the Family Business
- Financial Literacy
- Human Resources
- Introduction to Business in Asia
- Innovation for Powerful Outcomes
- Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power
- Management for a Competitive Edge
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- Principles of Project Management
- Public Private Procurement
- Strategic Management

Free HR Services:

- Model contracts, documents and notices
- Compliance assistance
- Employee handbook review and revision
- HR policy advice
- Job description review and creation
- Employee benefit materials
- Global workforce assistance
- Visa advice for workers travelling abroad

#### **Discounted HR Services:**

- Bespoke HR consultancy
- Temporary workers
- Psychometric testing
- Onsite training for both supervisors and employees
- Visa application assistance

#### Other Services on Offer

Over 750 free downloadable policies, forms, documents, letters, templates and fact sheets in the members portal, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Discounts on Executive Search and Recruitment, Employee Counselling, Independent Employee Reviews, Health and Safety Audits, Domestic and International Legal Services and all other Human Resource Needs.

#### **BENEFITS FOR YOUR OPERATIONS TEAM**

#### Free Downloadable Contact Databases

Don't waste precious marketing dollars guessing on where to find partners. Get business done more effectively and efficiently with Council's top-quality, in-depth, and highly-targeted business contact databases.

The multiple use data fields typically include: contact name, job title, company name, address, telephone, business description, classification code, employee size band and web address.

The data is downloaded as a CSV or Excel file for ease of use and compatible with most mail merge systems.

Council staff can also facilitate custom research based on your particular requirement.

#### Free Export Advice & Assistance

Council staff can guide you through the export process and provide the connections, information and training you need to make exporting a successful component of your sales programme.

They are also knowledgeable about foreign government regulations, certifications, labelling requirements, technical barriers to trade, contract laws, and taxation.

#### Free Business & Legal Support Helpline

The Council's business support helpline service offers advice, inspiration and practical help to business owners and managers on all areas of owning and running a business, regardless of size. The helpline provides a quick response service to people with simple business questions of all types. It also provides a more in-depth service for those with more complex enquiries.

In many cases we can answer your question rapidly. In more complex situations we can refer you to the right individual and/or trusted organization who can provide you with an in-depth solution.

#### **Dispute Resolution**

TLegal problems don't have to be long, arduous legal battles. The Council can provide both arbitration and mediation services in a fast, efficient manner at a low cost. Services are solution driven, allow for creativity, conciliatory, and confidential.

#### Free Customizable Courseware

Why write your own courseware for your staff when we've done it for you?

The Council provides its members with a range of pre-written courseware that you can customise, brand and print at no extra cost. These courseware solutions are designed to improve skills within organisations, leading to better employee retention, higher productivity and greater sales.

Types of Customizable Courseware Available:

- Business Administration (5 different courses)
- Business Management (8 different courses)
- Health & Safety (6 different courses)
- Human Resources (9 different courses)
- Sales Management (8 different courses)
- •Training Skills (4 different courses)

#### Free Procurement Assistance

Being proactive in your approach to supply chain management will help you gain an edge over your competitors.

Council staff can:

- Locate qualified, sources of goods and/or services
- Verify the credentials of the seller
- Provide advice on importing goods from overseas
- Help your business to move fast, wherever you are

#### Free Mentor Matchmaking Service

Whether you are new to business, have plans to grow, or are facing some new challenges; working with a mentor can help you with advice and insights that can sometimes mean the difference between failure and success.

Council approved mentors are experienced business persons who are there to provide an objective sounding-board for working out dilemmas and thinking strategically about your business. They provide support, stimulate your thinking, challenge your ideas and give you a second opinion.

You may also wish to volunteer as a business mentor. This is a great way to help share knowledge, grow your own network and increase your sphere of influence.

#### BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP MARKETING NEXUS: HOW BENEFICIAL IS IT?

#### By: Paul Osei-Prempeh

The world of marketing has metamorphosed as the years have unrolled. This journey in the field of marketing for all grades of businesses and entities has unveiled new ways of management for individuals concerned. The aspect of relationship marketing has been of immense relevance in the



wake of these dramatic changes among businesses in the country. Recent marketing trends make a revelation that makes relationship marketing worth embracing.

What then is the concept of relationship marketing? Relationship marketing is an all-inclusive marketing process that stems from a direct response marketing campaigns that stresses on retaining the customer and personalization of customer relationship. It assembles a lot of marketing models and has the satisfaction of the customer as one of primal importance than the mere rendering of service in the form of sales transaction with the customer. This proactive form of rapport with the customer differs from other marketing phenomenon as it recognizes the value of the customer or client in the future rather than only in the present. Communication in the sphere of relationship marketing therefore is not limited to the direct advertising and sales promotional forms. Social forms of communication therefore play a vital role here as it connects the buyer to the seller beyond the world of business. This is made ever so simple and easier with the advent and development in the field of technology. The presence of the internet with its accompanying social media platforms can be taken advantage of in creating an enviable liaison with the client or customer.

Basing its origin from the early 1980s from the United States of America, relationship marketing can serve as effective tools for companies and enterprises in attracting, obtaining, maintaining and promoting satisfying relationship with the customer. It is a useful marketing tool in beating competition in one's area of business. When there exists competitive products, brands or service, the need to involve in a social relationship with your customers becomes the defining quality in a successful venture.

The personalization of relationship with customer into a one-to-one relationship is also very useful tool for relaying information from businesses to their clienteles. With the inclusion of technology and the internet as a tool of relationship marketing, there can be a faster and more efficient information transfer between businesses and their customers.

This effective and efficient way of relaying information can also prove financially beneficial as well as convenient. Businesses can deliver products upon the request of customers with the help of the already existent information medium and channel set by both parties. This liaison between the business entity and the customer can assure the convenience of the customer as products or services can be rendered to the customer who may be in dire need of the product or service of a particular business entity at a certain point in time. Needless to say that most clients have been saved the worry and cost of using a product in the wrong way that could have harmed us or destroyed the product due to relationship marketing.

In the same way, a business entity can reduce the number of complaints and lawsuits about their products and their services that come to their management by principally zooming more on relationship marketing and its accompanying client satisfaction aspect. In the health and pharmaceutical sectors where I happen to work, clients can be saved from death or permanent disability with healthcare providers engaging in relationship marketing in achieving both business and healthcare satisfaction. When it comes to profitability, relationship marketing is one that is worth it all. Its core principle of customer retention can help to generate about seventy percent (70%) more profit according to John Fleming and Jim Asplund. Thus, channeled finances into relationship marketing in most cases will be recouped. A longer clientele relationship diminishes the cost spent whilst the profit made is however maximized still. They are also less inclined to change products with less focus on the cost of products or services alike. Their loyalty also tends to show in their discourse with other potential customers or clients who may switch the business they patronize as a result.

So why not try out the all-inclusive relationship marketing as an innovative transformation for your business? Endeavor to make that exodus from the traditional and conservative marketing which is transaction-limited to the more efficient, cost-effective and prospective relationship marketing and see that micro, small or medium enterprise of yours experience a photonic growth to the acme.



# **START UPS AND PR:** Luxury or Necessity?

By: Sandra Dufie Manu Public Relations practitioner Sandy20204u@gmail.com

Start-up businesses are undoubtedly the engine of growth for every successful economy the world over. The contribution of entrepreneurship to job creation and growth, is key to promoting livelihood opportunities for the youth throughout the country. Ghana now, more than ever, is beginning to witness a pleasant sight of young businesses-minded professionals who are willing and able to move entrepreneurial skills and development unto a marvelous pedestal hinged on technology.

Notwithstanding the myriad challenges facing entrepreneurship and SMEs generally, the relevance of Public Relations (PR) to any sprouting business cannot be overruled. One of the questions asked most frequently by investors and venture capitalists is whether a start-up should make an investment in a PR program. While the obvious answer from a PR practitioner's perspective is a resounding yes, I believe it would make good sense to explain why. The role of PR is to build awareness, trust and affinity between a brand and its publics, whether the brand is a centuries-old institution or a start-up founded yesterday.

Start-ups are often asked as part of the funding process to provide a sense of how viable they are, and more often than not, these start-ups have no projections whatsoever as to how they intend leveraging PR to grow their business, as they rather feel it is luxury and not a necessity or simply thinking "this is not the time." The first job of PR is to grow awareness and build trust through earned media – from traditional media coverage to social media discussions to paid engineered write-ups to earned media and advertising. There are a lot of potential buyers who could buy from a start-up, but none of them are obtainable if the start-up has no awareness or trust. That is to say PR has to expand the obtainable market with earned media. Each piece of earned media coverage, each hit, helps to expand the awareness and trust of the startup, which will in turn grow the obtainable market into an available market, and churn the start-up's marketing efforts into revenue.

The market space that need the services of a start-up, is the portion of the market that can be realistically obtained through good PR, marketing, and sales efforts. This part of the market is your audience share, your leads generated, and your customers. As a matter of fact, the global market for the start-up's industry may be huge, and even the market opportunity may be fairly sized, but the start-up itself has little chance to gain a good market share and top-of-mind awareness. Marketing may be able to do the trick but PR will stamp your brand on the minds of your already existing customers as well as your prospective customers, and this will invariably make certain your brand visibility, build trust, generate warmth towards the brand, provide you with a good reach, engender trials and referrals, and give you a competitive advantage. The benefits of PR to a start-up are incredible.

With sufficient coverage, with sufficient awareness and trust, the start-up becomes a legitimate force in a ready market. The PR agency working on behalf of your brand builds connections and relationships in the media, both traditional and new, so that the business/ company can obtain a significant portion of its accessible market in a fertile market space. (This will be at a time when the business is in a position to afford a PR agency or own a PR department). After a certain point, a business may realize a market change or an evolution in its products and services. With the great relationships that PR built on behalf of the startup through the brand/product/service launch, a great PR agency can bridge the gap for the start-up to expand outside of its launch space into a full blown business to smile at. This is where the investment in PR pays off significant dividends for investors and start-ups. The startup's new products and services have pre-built relationships with media that can accelerate growth and revenue. At this point, instead of having to launch into new business hunting spree, the start-up's PR agency can land and expand existing media relationships to garner new coverage quickly.

PR absolutely essential to a start-up business, and that is why investors who are funding start-ups need to allocate budget not only to marketing, but to Public Relations and advertising, whether through the use of technology or regular advertising. The first stage as a start-up business is to make your brand's service or product viable by expanding the prospective market into a ready market, and second, to expand and own the market space with your products or services. Not only does PR provide start-ups with awareness creation and gap bridging, but PR remains an inevitable enabler that must be taken full advantage of by every business owner, regardless of the business size or period of existence.



# HOW TO MOVE YOUR COMPANY FROM LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL MARKET

Author: Francis Sabutey is a top-notch blogger, SEO expert and CEO of Think Expand Ltd.

If it's working locally, it can equally work globally. The challenge is moving from the local to the global market and taking your business to the next level. There are a lot of things required and you have to consider various growth angles that can be employed to make that strategic growth. To simplify the process, you need to make sure you have the right product and the right global opportunity and then supply leverage a supply chain to move from the local to the global market.

#### **Global Demand Opportunity**

You need to consider checking the demand opportunities for the product you want to export. Exporting products to where it is not needed, required or has low demand opportunity is an effort in futility. Study the demand opportunities in the country you want to export to. Look at the export promotion arm of the Commence Department of other countries and read about the products in need. Get the real facts on the ground before shipping.

#### **The Right Product Standard**

Before you consider taking your business global, you need to make sure you have the right product standards that meet international requirements. Your poorly packaged product may sell locally but that does not mean that same will apply on the global market. You have to step up your product quality, content, packaging and delivery before taking it global.

#### The Global Supply System

As long as you have the demand and product in place, the next step is to supply. You need to find a way to break out of the local. To do this, you can consider the following options:

#### • Selling Through a Local Distributor

What if you have a local distributor in the country you are looking to export to? What if you have a local distributor with the local presence who wants your product to sell to existing customers over there. In this way, everything will be simple and easy. However, it's not easy to build the right network to start doing international trade.

You need to trust the local distributor, which means meeting the local distributor either in your country and coming into terms with him/her to grow the business. Once all agreements have been put in place, the local distributor will simply place an order for your goods, you supply and get paid. The local distributor will in turn, resell to customers overseas and the supply chain will be complete.

#### • Selling Through a Joint Venture Partner

Instead of looking for a local distributor, you can also look for a joint venture partner with a

related product base. Could it be that a business abroad has been receiving a request for a product they don't have or produce? They might be willing to partner with you and sell your product to their local customers. Look for a joint partner through international trade events, international trade fair, Chamber of Commerce and any medium possible to build the right network. Always ensure you have a legal contract before supply starts.

• Selling Through a Sales Visit This is a simple way to enter the global market. What you have to do is to simply travel outside and follow all international regulations to sell your product to their local customers. That way, you can sell directly to export customers and receive their inputs to refine your product base. However, it involves a lot of cost and legwork.

#### • Selling Through a Website

Of all the steps, this is the simplest. Yet, simple does not mean easy. You have to get the job done to move your products from the local market to the global market. And this starts with an ecommerce website where you can actually get international clients to order and have your products delivered to them. You can build your own website to do this or look at third-party websites like Jumia, Amazon, eBay and many others. Websites are good for products that do not require much explanation and demonstration by a sales rep.



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# DESIGNING YOUR PRODUCT TO MEET DEMANDS OF GLOBAL MARKET

By: Francis Sabutey is a top-notch blogger, SEO expert and CEO of Think Expand Ltd.

Product packaging is very key if you are looking to enter the global market. Just because your products are doing well on the local market does not mean they will be successful in the global market. If you fail to design your products to reflect the standards of the global market, you're bound to fail woefully. A report by "Design Week" Magazine revealed that effective product design must reflect global markets.

The reason you need to ensure your products are effectively designed and packaged to reflect global markets is that the culture, tastes, preference, legislatures, regulations, ideas, standards and prices differ in various ways. Although these may differ from country to country, there is enough information to help you tweak your products for exports.

If you are rebranding and redesigning your products for the global market, you may want to consider the following:

#### 1. Localization

Every country has its own culture, beliefs and lifestyle. To be successful in selling to people in other countries, you need to design the product to suit the local consumption of that country. The product must reflect the culture and the way of life of the people. Different customer segments have different priorities and this must be factored in product design for the global market.

#### 2. Legislature

Recently, many local products have been rejected on the global market because of failure to meet the required standards of the trade associations in the foreign countries. To get your products onto the global market, you need to, first of all know the laws, rules and regulation that govern the quality and packaging standards of the product category you intend to export.

#### 3. Level of Branding

Branding is key when you plan to penetrate the global market. All your products need to have unique packaging and labelling that clearly makes it different from all others on the market. There must be a differentiation feature about the quality, branding, packaging and offering of your product. What is your global competitive advantage? What will make your product different on that market? How can your product out-sell similar products on the global market?

#### 4. Leverage Global Expertise

How can you design and create a product that is outstanding in the global market and even beats similar products? You need to consider letting your production and operations team leverage the expertise of other experts on the global market. Which country do you want to export to? You can request a consultation with an industry expert of that country to guide your product design to meet their local needs and consumption.

The world has become a global village and therefore global business can easily be done with the right systems and structures in place. You can break the barriers of entry to global markets and be at the forefront if all requirements are met to take your business to the next level.



# HOMEDA KENTE

PROJECTING GHANA THROUGH KENTE

#### THE KENTE CLOTH

Kente, known as nwentoma in Akan, is a type of silkand cotton faric made of inter woven cloth strips made and native to the Akan ethnic group of Ghana. Kente is made in Akan lands such as Ashanti Kingdom including the towns of Bonwire, Adanwomase, Sakora Wonoo, and Ntonso in the Kwabre areas of the Ashanti Region.

Today, Kente is worn by almost every Ghana -ian tribe and known to people outside the Ghana. Kente comes from the word Kenten, which means **Basket** in the Asante dialect. The Akans refer to kente as nwentoma, meaning woven cloth.

Globally, the kente cloth is used on different kinds of materials such men and women suit, chairs, slippers, bow tie, shoes, caps, watches etc. HOMEDA KENTE

#### ABOUT US

A Ghanaian based Kenteweaving firm. We are into all kinds of original Kente products. All our products are locally made to meet international standards.

Our office and showroom are located at Ntonso in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Visit our showroom today forthe best kente.

Call Us +233 (0)248 463 500




## 7 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH **DIGITAL MARKETING**

By: Francis Sabutey is a top-notch blogger, SEO expert and CEO of Think Expand Ltd.

Marketing is an essential component of every business. When a business is well marketed, it attracts sales opportunities, and when the sales opportunities are nurtured, they will convert into customers.

Digital technology has transformed the way people communicate throughout the world. This has led to a new way of marketing known as digital marketing. Digital marketing is simply marketing through digital channels like social media, email, website and mobile apps on the internet.

In today's hyper-connected world, it is just impossible for you not to take adveantage of the use of digital marketing to promote your business. You have to get in the game and become effective at using digital marketing for business development.

Justin Lee of Hubspot Inc said, "For many companies, failure to adapt to new technology means getting left behind and losing business. Your prospects and customers are researching and buying online, so why aren't you focusing on marketing to them via digital channels?"

Well, so let us look at the 7 ways to use digital marketing to promote your business.

#### 1. Local Search Marketing

The very first step to using digital marketing to promote your business is local search marketing. 70% of people online are shopping for local products and services through their mobile phones. People are looking for businesses online to provide them with those services and products. And they are using Google to find the businesses. So at its minimum, your business must be found locally on search engines.

#### How do you do that?

- 1. Set up a responsive website for your business and ensure that it is added to search engines.
- 2. Add your business website and other descriptions to local business directories.
- 3. Set up an account for your business on Google My Business.
- 4. Create social media pages for your business on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram.
- 5. Add your business website and social media pages to your business cards, flyers and banners.

These five things will enable people to find you online locally when they are looking for items related to your industry.

#### 2. Content Marketing

The companies that educate the most sell the most. To leverage content marketing to promote your business, you must begin to create high value and problem-solving contents and distribute them to your target customers.

The content you use can take various formats such as:

- Articles
- Case Studies
- Industry Reports/News
- EBooks

Once you create this content, you can publish them on your corporate blog on your website and then share them to your prospective and respective customers using social share buttons on your business blog. The more you blog and promote the blog posts, the more traffic you drive to your business website.

#### 3. Social Media Marketing

Social media has become a powerful force in our daily lives. Even the radio and TV stations are leveraging on social media to increase the reach and exposure of their programs. So why not your business?

**Digital Vidya** said, "Social Media Marketing works best to drive traffic onto your website. Social Media Marketing (SMM) gives a lot of analytics on the effectiveness of the advertising campaigns, conversion rates etc."

With the help of your business blog and great contents, you can engage your audiences as well as drive traffic from social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram to your website.

#### 4. Search Engine Marketing

You can't ignore search engines in your digital marketing strategy. Search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing and Ask are notable places for people when they are looking for information regarding their needs, problems and wants.

Local search marketing puts you on search engines, but it is search engine optimization (SEO) that keeps you on search engines. To rank higher and higher on search engines in relation to issues about your industry, you must start blogging and optimizing your blog posts for better search engine rankings. Also, make sure your website has a better web hosting so that you can give a better user experience to your audience.

#### 5. Mobile Marketing

You don't want to skip mobile marketing. The number of mobile phone users worldwide is

increasing astronomically. That means you must find a way to leverage mobile devices and mobile communication channels to promote your business.

WhatsApp, Instagram, Viber & Snapchat are all mobile messaging apps which thrive and operates on mobile devices. You can also use your SMS marketing systems to promote your business via mobile phones. All you need is to develop strategies to use mobile messaging apps and SMS to build your business.

#### 6. E-Mail Marketing

Despite the social media noise, email marketing is still effective. Many people using the internet today have an email and they check their email from time to time. That means you can begin to get your marketing promotions through email marketing.

But you have to be careful with email marketing and desist from spamming people. Always request for people's permission before you add them to your mailing list so that they may not see your email newsletters as spams. Be educative and not pushy with marketing promotions.

#### 7. Online Advertising

Businesses need fast and quick sales. That means there is a need to invest some of their sales revenues in an advertisement. Digital platforms provide means for businesses to invest in digital advertising at the lowest cost possible with the best return on investment.

Some online advertising platforms are Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Twitter Ads, LinkedIn Ads and many others. With the right content, the right target market and the right geographical targeting, you can reap the benefits of digital adverting within some few hours.

How are you using digital marketing to promote your business?

## Improved Quality

Increased Efficiency

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Ephesus Consulting Ltd. [ECL], is a Ghanaian consulting company that provides training and consulting services for businesses.

We provide relevant and practical financial training programs for Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs] owners and managers aimed at building their capacity through presentations, case studies and group work.

#### Our Mission

Our aim among others is:

To facilitate the growth of SMEs to enable them transition into larger entities capable of competing in the marketplace and making significant contributions to national development.

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- Human Resource Management
- Risk Management
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- Business Plan Preparation
- Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Planning
- Marketing
  - Financial Modelling Basic, Intermediate & Advanced
- Our Services
  - These include but not limited to:
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  - Preparation of Management Accounts and Annual Financial Statements & Reports
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# MARKET ANALYSIS

#### Market research – The Why?

No matter how good the product or the service is, the business cannot succeed without the implementation of an effective marketing plan. This starts with a careful and a systematic market research approach. It is very dangerous to simply assume that as a business own, you already know about your intended market. There is the need to undertake a market research to ensure that, the business is on track. Use the business planning process as the best guild to uncover data opportunity to aid you question your marketing efforts.

#### Market research – The How?

There are 2 kinds of market research: primary and secondary.

Secondary research means using published information such as industry profiles, trade journals, newspapers, magazines, census data, and demographic profiles. This type of information is available in government agencies, industry associations, chambers of commerce and vendors who sell to your industry.

Start with the local government agencies example, National Board of Small Scale Industries, Ministry Trade and Industry, Ghana Statistical Service or the National Data Archive etc. Most of these institutions are ready and pleased to guide you through their business data collection. There are more online sources than you could possibly use. The association or the trade chambers has good information on the local areas, these trade associations often have excellent trade publications on industry specific data. Primary market research means gathering your own data. For example, you could do your own traffic count at a proposed location, use the yellow pages to identify competitors, and do surveys or focus group interviews to learn about consumer preferences. Professional market research can be very costly, but there are many books that show small business owners how to do effective research by themselves.

In your marketing plan, be as specific as possible; give statistics & numbers and sources. The marketing plan will be the basis, later on, for the all-important sales projection.

## Conditions (Facts about your industry and specifically your target market)

- What is the total size of your market?
- Current demand in the target market,
- Trends in target market: growth trends, trends in consumer preferences, and trends in product development.
- What is the growth potential and opportunity for a business of your size?
- What barriers of entry do you face in entering this market with your new company? Some typical ones are: high capital costs, high production costs, high marketing costs, consumer acceptance/ brand recognition, training/skills, unique technology/patents, unions, shipping costs, tariff barriers/quotas,
- And of course, how will you overcome the barriers?

#### How could the following affect your company?

- Government regulations
- Changing economy
- Change in technology
- Change in your industry

#### Customers

Identify targeted customers, their characteristics, and their geographic locations; i.e., demographics (age, income, gender, family life-cycle), type of business (if you are selling to businesses), lifestyles, behaviour, psycographics (personality).

The description will be completely different depending on whether the plan is to sell to other businesses or directly to consumers. If the business is to sell a consumer product, but sell it through a channel of distributors: wholesalers and retailers, then as business owner, you must carefully analyze both the end consumer and the middlemen businesses to which you sell.

You may well have more than one customer group, identify the most important groups and then for each consumer group, construct what is called a demographic profile:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Income level
- Social class/occupation
- Education
- Other (specific to your industry)

## For business customers, the demographic factors might be:

- Industry (or portion of an industry)
- Location
- Size of firm
- Quality/technology/price preferences
- Other (specific to your industry)

#### For each group determine the following:

- What is the typical customer purchasing process?
- How do they go about making a decision on what they need and then actually purchasing it?
- What are their key buying criteria?
- What are the most important factors to the customer in deciding between competitive choices?
- How long is the typical sales cycle for your targeted customer segment(s)?

#### **Understanding the Competition**

What products and companies will compete with the business? List the major competitors with names & addresses. Will they compete



with your business across the board, or just for certain products, certain customers, or in certain locations? Will you have important indirect competitors? (For example, video rental stores compete with theatres, though they are different types of business.)

## How will your products/services compare with the competition?

Use the Competitive Analysis table below, to compare your company with your three most important competitors. In the first column are key competitive factors. Since these vary from one industry to another, you may want to customize the list of factors. In the cell labelled "Me", state how you honestly think your products or service will likely stack up in customers' minds. Then check whether you think this factor will be strength or a weakness for the business. Sometimes it is hard to analyze our own weaknesses. Try to be very honest here as much as possible. Better still, get some disinterested strangers to assess you and this can be a real eye-opener. You want an honest assessment of your firm's strong and weak points.

Now analyze each major competitor. In a few words, state how you think they compare. In the final column, estimate the importance of each competitive factor to the customer. 1 = critical; 5 = not very important.

Factor	Ме	Company A	Company B	Company C	Importance
Products					
Price					
Quality					
Selection					
Service					
Reliability					
Stability					
Expertise					
Company					
reputation					
Location					
Appearance					
Sales method					
Credit policies					
Advertising					
lmage					

#### **Table 1: Competitive Analysis**

Having done the competitive matrix, write a short paragraph stating your competitive advantages and disadvantages.

#### Work towards your Niche

Now that you have systematically analyzed your industry, your product, your customers and the competition, you should have a clear picture of where your company fits in the world. In one short paragraph, define your niche, your unique corner of the market. What percent share of the market will you have?

"If everybody is doing it one way, there's a good chance you can find your niche by going exactly in the opposite direction. – Sam Walton"

Thank you for reading

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Through the Globus Network, they company have provided tailor-made insurance solutions to companies and individuals in over 48 out of the 54 African countries.

#### Activa provides:

• Expert and world class client service backed by some of the world's best financial securities such as Munich Re, Swiss Re, Lloyd's, Africa Re, Ghana Re and its own Globus Re, among others

• Customized innovative client solutions based on benchmark insurance under-writing knowledge and specialised skills

• World class service; delivered by modern, dynamic, knowledgebased and efficient management systems backed by the state of the art information technology (IT) systems.

• Access to over 48 markets across Africa. We cross geographical and linguistic boundaries: We have representation in 48 African countries spanning English, French, Arabic and Portuguese speaking Africa through the Globus Network.

• World class expertise and service delivery to the doorsteps of local blue-chip and SME businesses in Ghana.

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#### **Our Strengths**

• Extended geographical presence across Africa with pooled competencies and expertise throughout Africa (Centres of excellence).

• Excellent customer relations and prompt payment of legitimate claims

• Preferred Insurer of most of the multinational and blue chip companies in Ghana

• Sound Reinsurance backing with Munich Re, Swiss Re, Lloyds, Africa Re and Ghana Re among others

Activa Insurance is ready, willing and able to support Ghanaian Businesses and Industry with all its insurance needs, ranging from protection of their assets and the liabilities that could arise from their use; protection for their businesses and possible interruptions that could arise following the



Mr. Solomon Lartey MD.CEO

occurrence of perils such as fire, flood, earthquake, explosion etc. and many other unforeseen circumsatnces that could jeopardise business operations in Ghana.

## Get activated; talk to Activa today!

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- Identity checks
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  - Right to Work and Citizenship
- > Social Trace and **Character Reference** checks

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#### Who we are:

- Vista Consults is staffed by an experienced team of professionals with diverse backgrounds in HR, Operations, Administration and project management.
- Vista Consults has people with tremendous experience in conducting screening of staff to very high standards such as 85 7858:2006 standards (www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk.)
- Experience in vetting over 600 staff within 5 months (October 2006 to March 2007)
- Affiliated to Greenfields (UK), National Security Alliance (UK) and Insight Security (US)

We collaborate and work with the following organizations:

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## THE MADE IN GHANA LOGO

The logo was launched in April 2015 to help consumers identify genuine and authentic Made in Ghana products. The mark symbolizes the optimism of producers, linking the everyday determination of Ghanaians with the aspiration of consumers everywhere to make a difference.

The design of the logo has a black background which symbolizes the African colour and the people. Its circular edge represents the trading wheel of the never-ending delivery of Ghanaian excellence. Inside it is a half star in the national colours from left red, yellow and green with inscription 'Made in Ghana' in between the star. Underneath, is written premium quality, assuring consumers of the worth of their money. The Made in Ghana logo is a challenge to think quality first, embrace productivity and create business results.

The logo is meant to act as a seal on goods that have been certified and accepted as meeting the Made in Ghana standards which has been produced to a premium quality standard.

Buying a premium Made-in-Ghana product supports the local companies that employ young people to earn a decent living, thereby contributing to the economic development of our country.

"YOUR BRAND IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM" - Jeff Bezos



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