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Why fashion brands are betting on TikTok for sales



INTERVIEW

Clothing the Masterpiece: Sabina Fayemiwo's Mission to Reveal the Inner Strength of Women



SPORTS

AFCON: Super Eagles, Egypt clash for bronze in Casablanca

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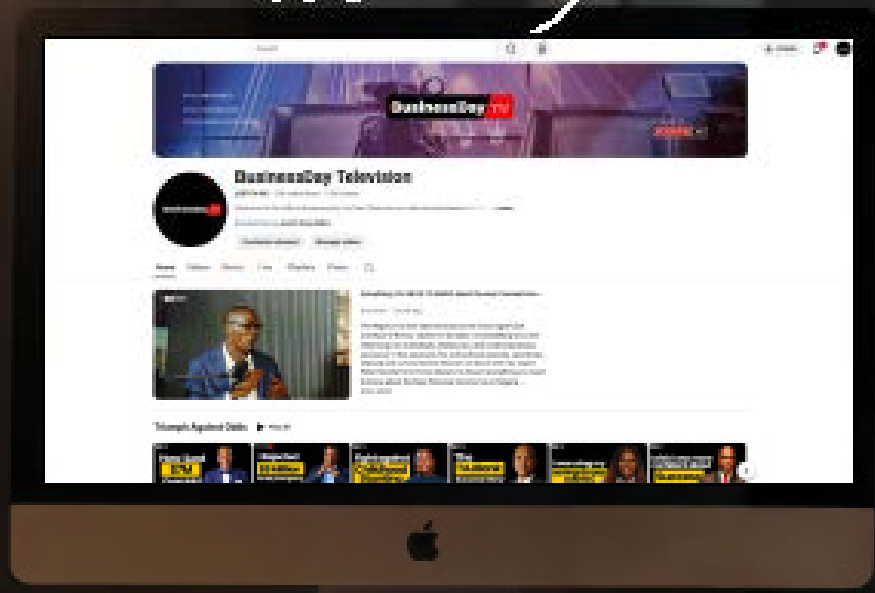
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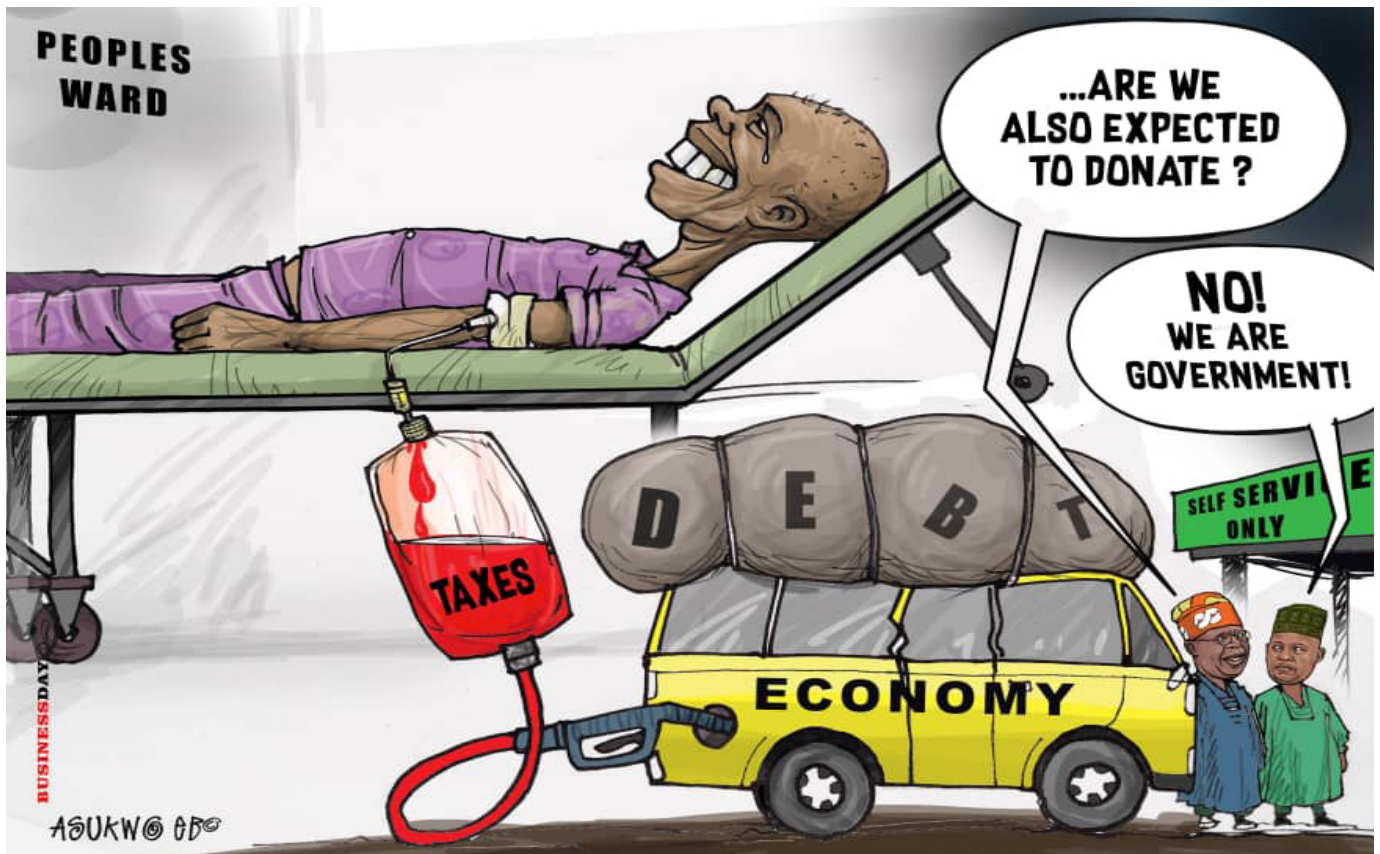
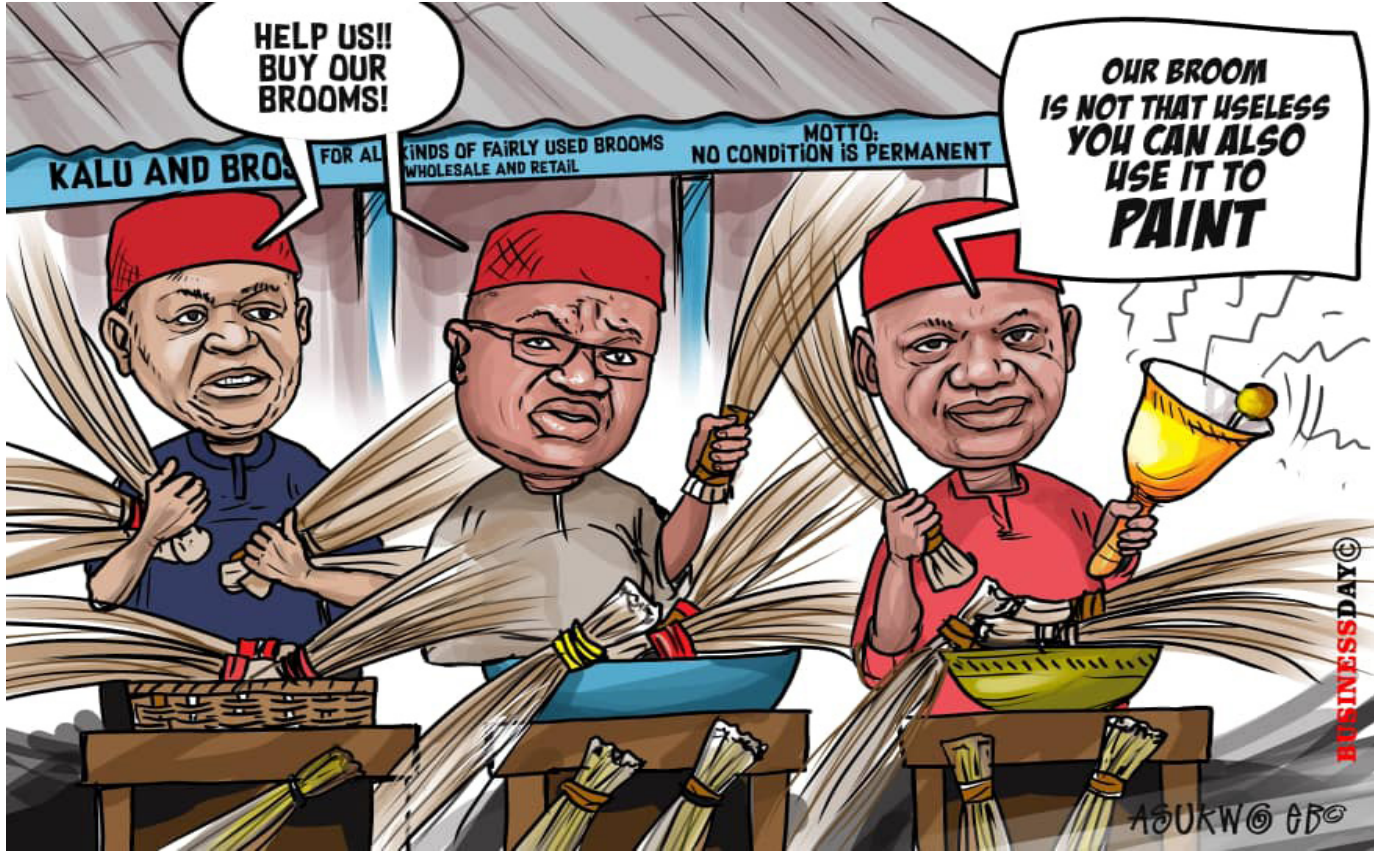


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WHY FASHION BRANDS ARE BETTING ON TIKTOK FOR SALES

CHIOMA ONUH



fashion vendors and Nigerian designers. Among Gen Z and younger millennials, TikTok now functions as a visual search engine. Users actively search for outfit ideas, thrift finds, styling tips and designer recommendations using keywords rather than relying solely on curated feeds.

This behaviour signals a shift away from traditional e-commerce discovery, which depends on structured listings and brand-led navigation.

The advantage TikTok offers is informational efficiency. Short-form video compresses multiple decision-making inputs into seconds: fit, fabric movement, styling options and perceived quality.

Nigeria's fashion market is being reshaped by young designers and vendors offering style inspirations and various clothing options and this has really changed how young consumers discover products. TikTok has emerged as a key entry point into the fashion buying process, altering demand patterns for both fast

With rising prices and declining discretionary income, this reduces purchase risk.

Consumers are less willing to experiment blindly and more inclined to buy after visual confirmation.

Live selling has further accelerated this shift. Fashion vendors in Nigeria increasingly use TikTok Live as a sales interface, even though the platform does not support in-app checkout in Nigeria. Transactions are completed externally via direct transfers and messaging apps, but the discovery, negotiation and trust-building stages happen on TikTok.

This mirrors informal market structures long familiar to Nigerian consumers. Sellers demonstrate goods, answer questions in real time and adjust pricing dynamically. What has changed is scale. A single live session can attract hundreds or thousands of viewers, extending the reach of micro-businesses without requiring advertising spend or physical space.

For fast fashion vendors, TikTok rewards speed and volume. Sellers who can quickly source trending items and price competitively benefit from algorithmic visibility and impulse buying. The economics favour low margins, high turnover and rapid content output.

For Nigerian designers, TikTok plays a different role. It allows them to justify higher price points by showing process rather than product alone. Videos of tailoring, fittings and fabric selection help reposition garments as value-based rather than trend-based purchases. This has enabled some designers to compete not on price, but on differentiation and narrative.

Consumer behaviour suggests that most buyers are not choosing between fast fashion and local designers in absolute terms. Spending is segmented by use case. Everyday wear is increasingly sourced from fast fashion and thrift sellers,

while Nigerian designers retain relevance for workwear, events and statement pieces. TikTok collapses these options into a single discovery environment, intensifying competition for attention rather than loyalty.

The platform is also influencing business operations. Successful sellers are those who treat content as infrastructure: regular posting schedules, live session programming, clear pricing communication and fulfilment processes outside the app. TikTok does not replace logistics, but it has become central to demand generation.

From an economic perspective, TikTok lowers entry barriers into fashion retail while increasing competitive pressure.

Visibility is no longer gated by capital or storefronts, but by content performance. This favours adaptability over scale and rewards businesses that understand audience behaviour.

What is emerging is a hybrid model where informal selling practices meet algorithmic distribution. The implications extend beyond fashion. TikTok's role in shaping consumer search behaviour suggests broader shifts in how young Nigerians will approach commerce, branding and trust across sectors.

Shop owners in major markets now leverage TikTok live, young students in their hostels also leverage this platform and this is not only fashion items, it includes household items and other goods. For now, fashion provides the clearest signal. In Lagos' crowded market, discovery has become the most valuable currency, and TikTok is where it is increasingly minted.

AFCON: SUPER EAGLES, EGYPT CLASH FOR BRONZE IN CASABLANCA

ANTHONY NLEBEM



After losing their semi-final clash to hosts Morocco, the Super Eagles will now battle for the bronze medal when they take on the Pharaohs of Egypt at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations on Saturday. The third-place match will be played at the Stade Mohamed V in Casablanca.

Both continental powerhouses, with a combined total of 10 AFCON titles, arrived in Morocco late last year, determined to lift another continental crown. However, their campaigns stalled at the semi-final stage, with Egypt falling to the Lions of Teranga in Tangier, while Nigeria were edged out by Morocco via a penalty shootout in Rabat.

While Egypt legend Mohamed Salah and Nigeria's talisman Victor Osimhen continue to chase their first AFCON gold medals, Saturday's encounter offers a chance for a consolation prize in Africa's flagship football tournament.

Unbeaten in regulation time and with 14 goals scored in six matches, the Super Eagles will feel unfortunate not to be in the final. Encouraging messages from supporters have helped lift team morale, with the squad training on arrival in Casablanca on Thursday evening. The team is also scheduled for an official training session at the Raja Oasis, training ground of African giants Raja Casablanca, on Friday evening.



Historically, Nigeria and Egypt hold the highest number of AFCON bronze medals, with the Super Eagles having won eight and the Pharaohs six. A win for Nigeria would extend that lead, while an Egyptian victory would narrow the gap.

Notably, Nigeria have never lost an AFCON bronze-medal match. Their first bronze came in 1976 at Egypt's expense, when goals from Haruna Ilerika (two) and Mudashiru Lawal secured a 3–2 victory in Addis Ababa.

Nigeria's most recent bronze-medal triumph was in Egypt, where Odion Ighalo's second-minute strike sealed a 1–0 win over Tunisia in Cairo. Other bronze-medal successes came in 1978 (after Tunisia abandoned the match), 1992 (2–1 win over Cameroon in Dakar), 2002 (1–0 win over hosts Mali in Mopti), 2004 (2–1 win over Mali in Monastir), 2006 (1–0 win over

Senegal in Cairo) and 2010 (1–0 win over Algeria in Benguela).

Saturday's encounter will mark the 25th senior-level meeting between both nations and their 10th clash at the Africa Cup of Nations. Nigeria have won five of the previous nine AFCON meetings, with two ending in draws—both goalless, in Rabat in 1988 and Tunis in 1994.

One of their most memorable AFCON encounters came in the 1984 semi-final in Abidjan, where Nigeria rallied from two goals down to draw level before edging Egypt 8–7 on penalties. Their most recent AFCON meeting was in the group stage in Garoua in January 2022, when Kelechi Iheanacho's first-half strike earned Nigeria a 1–0 victory.

Kick-off at the Stade Mohamed V is scheduled for 5pm.

CLOTHING THE MASTERPIECE: SABINA FAYEMIWO'S MISSION TO REVEAL THE INNER STRENGTH OF WOMEN

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA





Sabina Fayemiwo is the visionary founder of GWÉMÉ, a fashion and art house rooted in faith, cultural elegance, and the celebration of women.

With a professional background in strategy consulting and public sector advisory, she has spent years guiding senior leaders and institutions through transformation, structure, and long-term value creation. This rare blend of disciplined execution and creative intuition now shapes her newest venture, GWÉMÉ, a brand she is building with clarity, intention, and depth.

Her love for fashion began in childhood, watching her grandmother at the sewing machine, which sparked her love for beauty and fabrics. Though her career path led her into consulting and public service, building systems, solving problems, and leading teams, the creative whispers never left her. Eventually, she chose to embrace them fully, giving birth to GWÉMÉ.

Through GWÉMÉ, Fayemiwo seeks to celebrate women as God's masterpiece. Her designs are elegant yet functional, deeply meaningful yet versatile, created to accompany women through real-life moments with confidence, grace, and inner strength.

In this exclusive interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she speaks on why the world of high-stakes consulting was the perfect training ground for the world of fashion. In this candid conversation, Fayemiwo peels back the layers of the GWÉMÉ philosophy, revealing how she navigates the delicate balance between commercial scalability and spiritual stewardship. From the meticulous engineering of her "functional elegance" to her mission to transform African craftsmanship into a global movement, Fayemiwo invites us into a sanctuary where style is not just seen—it is felt.

What inspired you to start GWÉMÉ, and how does your background in strategy consulting influence your approach to fashion?

I grew up surrounded by what I call hobby tailors. My grandmother and my mother loved to sew, so creativity and clothing were always part of my environment. That love stayed with me. As I got older, I would walk into stores and find beautiful outfits that I could not wear. They either did not reflect my faith or my personal values, and when they did, they often felt uninspired or boring. GWÉMÉ was born from that gap.

My background in strategy consulting has deeply shaped how I build the brand. I am very detail oriented, practical, and excellence driven. I pay attention to structure, quality, process, and sustainability, not just aesthetics. I think about longevity, scalability, and how every decision ties back to purpose. Fashion, for me, is not guesswork. It is intentional design, executed with discipline.

You describe GWÉMÉ as a "cultural movement". Can you elaborate on what that means to you?

GWÉMÉ is a connection to my African roots and a bold expression of the beliefs that have shaped who I am. It is about telling an African story with a global language. Through fabric, form, and craftsmanship, I am expressing heritage, faith, identity, and womanhood in a way that resonates beyond borders.

Calling it a cultural movement means it goes beyond clothing. It is about reclaiming narrative, honoring craftsmanship, and reminding women that depth, beauty, and meaning still matter in a fast moving world.

How do you balance your faith and values with the commercial aspect of running a fashion brand?

I see myself as a steward of the gift, the dream, and the execution. My values are drawn directly from my faith, and they guide how I build the business. From how decisions are made, to how artisans are treated, to how customers are engaged, I am intentional about integrity, care, and excellence.



I believe that when God's love is embedded internally in process and culture, it naturally radiates outward. The commercial success then becomes a result, not the driver. Profit matters, but purpose leads.

Your designs are described as “elegant yet functional” and “deeply meaningful yet versatile”. Can you walk us through your design process?

We are clothing God's masterpiece, and that is no small task. Inspiration comes in different forms. Sometimes it is a quiet whisper, sometimes a clear vision, and other times a deep desire to meet a need I see in women.

I think about the woman who is becoming, as well as the woman who has already embraced her boldness. I ask how I want her to feel. Confident, Covered, Free, Seen. From there, I sketch, sample, fit, and test. I ask hard questions. Does it stand the test of time? Where can it be worn? How does it move with her life? Meaning is important, but so is wearability. A piece must live beyond a single moment.

What role do you think fashion plays in empowering women, and how does GWÉMÉ contribute to this?

Empowerment starts with how a woman feels when she gets dressed. Clothing can either shrink a woman or strengthen her. When a woman feels comfortable,

confident, and aligned with herself, it shows in how she speaks, moves, and shows up in the world.

GWÉMÉ contributes by designing pieces that affirm identity rather than compete for attention. The goal is not to overwhelm the woman, but to reveal her. The clothing becomes a quiet confidence, not a costume.

How do you see GWÉMÉ evolving in the next few years, and what are your goals for the brand?

I see GWÉMÉ evolving into a global brand rooted in African craftsmanship, with a strong physical and digital presence. Beyond fashion, I envision a broader ecosystem that includes art, community spaces, and deeper investment in artisan development.

The goal is to build something enduring. A brand that grows responsibly, trains artisans, creates jobs, and becomes a reference point for thoughtful design and meaningful storytelling.

You're building GWÉMÉ as a “sanctuary for women who seek depth over trend”. Can you tell us more about the kind of community you're trying to create?

GWÉMÉ is for women who are tired of noise and constant performance. Women who value meaning, faith, culture, and growth. The community is one of reflection, confidence, and shared values.

It is a space where women are reminded that they do not have to rush or conform to be relevant. They can be grounded, intentional, and still powerful.





What's the most important thing you hope women take away from wearing GWÉMÉ pieces?

I want women to walk away reminded of who they are. That they are seen, valued, and beautifully made. That they are God's masterpiece, not in theory, but in how they feel when they wear the piece.

If a woman feels more herself after wearing GWÉMÉ, then we have done our work.

Collaboration with artisans seems core to GWÉMÉ's ethos. What's the significance of this approach, and how do you find the right artisans to work with?

Artisans carry history, skill, and soul in their hands. Working with them is a way of honoring heritage and preserving techniques that might otherwise be lost. It is also about dignity, fair value, and mutual respect.

I look for artisans who care deeply about their craft, who are open to collaboration, and who share a commitment to quality. The relationship is not transactional. It is a partnership. Together, we create pieces that carry story, skill, and spirit.

DESIGNING AI FOR PEOPLE: MIRACLE AGHOLOR ON RESPONSIBILITY AND INNOVATION ACROSS CONTINENTS

CHISOM **MICHAEL**





Miracle Agholor is a UK-based technology professional, researcher, and emerging thought leader at the intersection of AI, agentic systems, and data sovereignty. He authored a book on AI and agentic intelligence, alongside research papers and articles exploring the societal impact of intelligent systems. Miracle combines research expertise with practical execution, having worked in UK public institutions and founded Vision Labs in Nigeria and VisionMinds LTD in the UK. His work focuses on building scalable technologies that drive social and economic value, particularly for Africa and other underrepresented regions, while promoting ethical and responsible AI adoption. In this interview CHISOM MICHAEL, he discusses AI's impact on society, the need for human accountability in autonomous systems, the importance of data sovereignty, and the responsibility of technologists to ensure technology benefits people fairly.

What first raised your concern about who controls intelligent systems and how that control is exercised?

I began thinking about this issue while watching AI systems evolve from helping with decision outcomes to influencing outcomes in ways that people are not even aware of. While

working as the Engineering Product Manager for 4T5NG, a new Startup emerging from Lite-Intel, I witnessed firsthand the struggles of product development groups in dealing with the responsible use of AI. Estimated global data indicates that AI has the potential to add trillions of dollars to the global economy in the coming decade. But these gains are not evenly distributed.

Where should the boundary sit between human judgement and autonomous decision-making?

The line is drawn when there are consequences that are impossible to reverse. While systems are being optimised and analysed, when these have implications for opportunity, security, or rights, human accountability is necessary. In most OECD nations, AI is being used to facilitate access to employment and services, while in 4T5NG, human accountability in our product deployment was essential.

When institutions deploy agentic systems, what failure tends to appear before anyone notices it?

The first failure is normally a loss of context. The metrics are showing normal function while the system is drifting away from what is required in reality. In my experience with public institutions in the UK and startups in Africa, invisible drift precedes visible damage. International assessments of digital public services suggest successful uptake, while trust is undermined.

How has working across UK public institutions and African innovation spaces changed your view of authority in digital systems?

I discovered that authority is established by relevance and impact, rather than technology per se. In the UK, systems build trust through institutional legitimacy. In African innovation ecosystems, trust is established by results. Africa has the youngest population in the world, but harnesses only a fraction of its economic digital value. Through my experiences with these two ecosystems, I've learned that authority in AI is about alignment with what people want.

In practical terms, how does data sovereignty affect an individual rather than a government?

Data sovereignty defines who ultimately enjoys the value of a particular type of data that people create. It can be noted that patients, consumers, and citizens create data that ultimately leads to billions of value created each year, but they do not enjoy the value directly because, without sovereignty, there will be nothing that people can do when there are inaccuracies in the data created.

What does a society give up when it relies on technologies designed without its context in mind?

The risk of losing self-determination and trust in institutions can arise in society if the systems are either imported or mismatched. The systems can worsen the inequalities in society while forcing society to adapt to the systems instead of adapting the systems to society. The data from the World Bank and AfDB show that if digital systems do not consider the reality in society, the adoption rate can rise, but the benefit to society can decline.

Why do discussions about AI often exclude the people most affected by its outcomes?

Because decision-makers emphasise efficiency and scalability, whereas affected individuals see implications firsthand—job loss, service denial, or unequal distribution. Statistics about employment and labour from the UK, the US, and economies in Africa suggest that low-visibility jobs are impacted by automation, but their concerns and needs are not considered.

How do you decide whether a problem deserves to be solved with technology at all?

In determining if problems deserve to be solved with technology or not shouldn't be a topic to be overemphasised, as its inventions have brought many positive transformations to many institutions, be it government and private institutions.

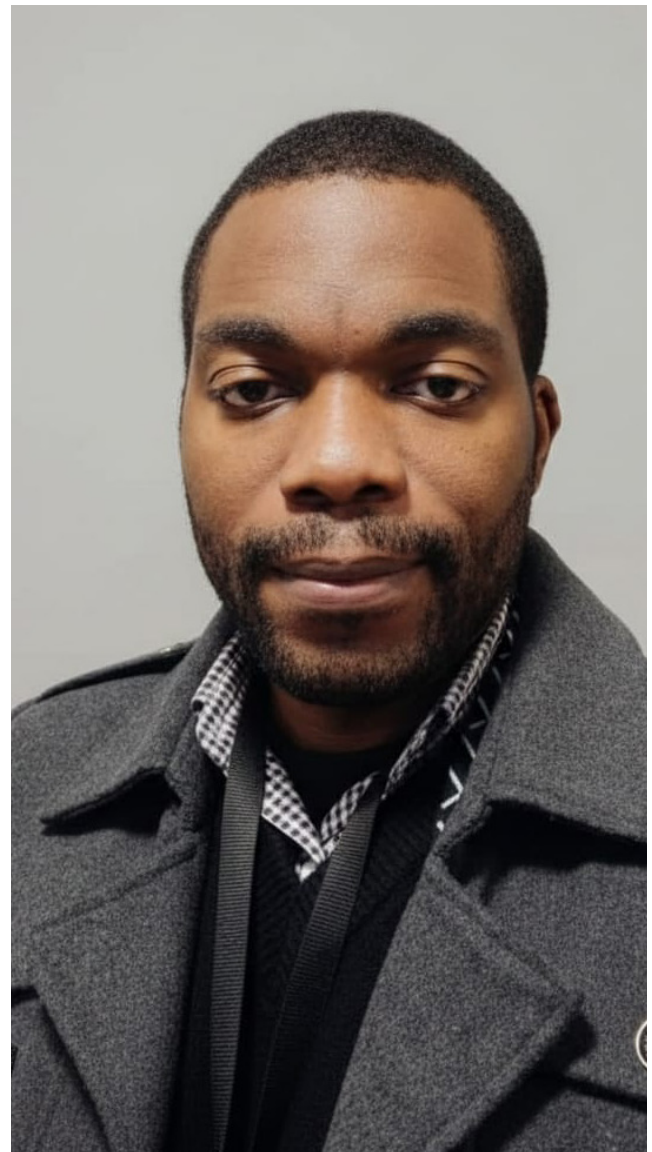
Should the question be, do my solutions address root problems or just speed up symptoms? At 4T5NG, my team analysed whether adding AI helped outcomes or just optimised problematic processes. "Administrative overhead now accounts for a large share of healthcare expenditures," and AI can ease this burden and "improve quality only if it's done in a way that's accountable."

What did leading youth-driven technology initiatives teach you about influence without formal power?

While I served as the NYSC Youth President for Ogun State, I initiated IT awareness and digital sensitisation campaigns. I have come to realise that power and influence come through shared purposes and trust, rather than through position or authority. Building teams and achieving shared goals and outcomes have been pivotal in understanding that leadership is about harnessed collective energy.

As intelligent systems shape access to work, capital, and services, what obligation do technologists carry?

Technologists must think about consequences and build accountability. Intelligent systems increasingly mediate opportunities, and design decisions mean winners and losers. In my own practice, bridging innovation ecosystems in both the UK and Africa, I see that it's important for technologists to take responsibility for using AI for the public good, reducing inequity, and aligning with societal needs. Technologists and technology have the task of forecasting future consequences and not just optimising initiatives for performance. With systems increasingly influencing access to labour, capital, and services, designers are confronted with ethical choices. To ignore this task is to be non-neutral.



HOW VICTOR DANIYAN IS BUILDING PAYMENTS AND ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR AFRICA

CHISOM **MICHAEL**

One of Africa's emerging leaders in fintech and clean energy is redefining how technology can solve everyday challenges. Victor Daniyan, Founder and CEO of Nearpays and Yourrider Energies, is building innovative payment solutions and sustainable energy infrastructure designed for the realities of the African market. A Certified Management Consultant and Forbes 30 Under 30 (2024) nominee, his work reflects a strong commitment to financial inclusion, clean technology, and continuous improvement, positioning him as a bold voice shaping the continent's digital and energy future. In this interview with CHISOM MICHAEL, he shares his entrepreneurial journey, the ideas behind Nearpays Soft POS, and how fintech and clean energy are driving inclusion and long-term impact across Africa.

You began your entrepreneurial journey quite early. What problem were you trying to solve at that stage of your life?

The core problem we were trying to solve was making it easy for individuals and businesses to accept card payments seamlessly. That was what led to the creation of Soft POS.

The mission has always been to simplify digital payments for everyone by using the best of technology, empowering businesses to grow and enabling individuals to take control of their finances with confidence.

Leadership often evolves through experience. Which lessons from your early years still guide how you lead today?

My early experiences taught me that leadership isn't defined by big moments but by consistency. Being fair, prepared, and dependable even when it's difficult still shapes how I lead today.

When progress slows or plans fail, how does the idea of continuous improvement shape your next move?

I learned early in life that continuous improvement is a fundamental requirement for any solution or product. Even with a solid product, users' needs keep evolving, and new requirements and desires emerge. As a result, solutions must continuously evolve and go through required iterations to suit users' needs.

Contactless and AI-led payments are central to Nearpays. What everyday financial frustration led you to build this solution?

Around 2020, I was running a small logistics business and partnered with a few e-commerce stores in Nigeria. My dispatch riders used POS terminals to receive payment at

customers' doorsteps for pay-on-delivery orders. However, there were many challenges, from low battery life on POS devices to frequent connectivity issues, and the difficulty of managing two devices: a phone for navigation and communication, and a bulky POS device for payments. These issues began to negatively affect the business.

I asked myself why dispatch riders couldn't use a single device to handle both navigation and payments, without all the problems associated with POS devices at the time.

That led me to research and work on solving this internal problem. Today, that solution has evolved into Nearpays Soft POS, built on contactless payment technology.

Regarding artificial intelligence, I see it as a product enhancer, a platform that products can leverage to improve what has already been built. We have always used AI to make our products better, from improved security and enhanced customer service systems to product simplicity and speed optimisation.

We are also currently using AI for tax automation in Nearpays, helping users complete their tax filings and documentation correctly to avoid over-taxation.

Nearpays SoftPOS removes the need for physical POS terminals. What inspired the decision to build a smartphone-based payment solution, and how do you see this changing payment adoption for small and medium businesses?

The focus was on creating a more simplified way of accepting card payments that is both affordable and accessible, with key pillars being affordability and accessibility.

We removed the major barrier that required businesses to own an additional device—a physical POS machine—to accept card payments, even when they already had a smartphone. When receiving bank transfers, all that is required is a phone, so we questioned why accepting card payments should be any different.

This led us to simplify card payment acceptance by eliminating the cost of a POS machine, bringing it effectively to zero. As a result, SMEs can accept card payments more easily, while corporate organisations can scale faster through a software-based solution rather than relying on expensive hardware alternatives.

How does Nearpays SoftPOS ensure secure transactions while operating entirely on a smartphone without extra hardware?

Security at Nearpays is our core foundation, and we ensure that nothing slips through the cracks.

We are PCI DSS—certified and fully compliant with global standards that require a secure environment for processing card transactions. We also work closely with Microsoft to maintain a highly secure infrastructure using Azure Sentinel, advanced firewall systems, and Microsoft Defender.

In addition, we leverage in-house artificial intelligence systems that prevent third-party applications from running simultaneously while the Nearpays SoftPOS app is active. We restrict data recording and enforce strict installation controls.

Furthermore, through our partnership with Visa, we ensure that all card information is fully protected, securely processed, and never stored in our database.

If you'd like, I can further refine this for press publication, investor communications, or technical documentation.

Beyond industry language and policy debates, how do you personally define financial inclusion?

Financial inclusion means creating solutions for everyone by eliminating barriers related to location, socioeconomic status, language, age, and other limitations.

Moving into clean energy is a major commitment. What convinced you that electric mobility and energy infrastructure mattered to Africa's future?

As I mentioned earlier, I previously ran a logistics business, which eventually led to my introduction to electric mobility.

A few years ago, we attempted to acquire a fleet of electric bikes due to constant fuel price increases, long fuel queues, and overall uncertainty, all of which were negatively impacting our operations. I also understood that electric bikes have fewer mechanical parts, making maintenance easier and more cost-effective in the long run.

However, an important question arose: where would we charge and maintain these bikes? At the time, there was almost no infrastructure for electric vehicles to thrive—especially two-wheelers, which have a smaller battery range compared to cars.

We realised someone needed to bridge that gap, so we began building infrastructure for electric mobility—not just for ourselves, but for others to leverage and easily transition to electric vehicles.

Along the way, we partnered with NNPC and have been scaling ever since. This is how we transitioned from being a logistics company focused on deliveries to building infrastructure that other logistics companies can leverage while transitioning to EVs. We currently have stations scattered across Nigeria.

Fintech and energy both face regulatory and cultural barriers. How do you navigate environments that are cautious about change?

Regulators have a responsibility to do their jobs, and fintech and energy are among the most regulated sectors. New requirements are constantly introduced, which keeps you on your toes. Staying compliant can be exhausting.

The key is building a knowledgeable relationship with regulators and structuring your business around models that allow for rapid iteration. Some regulations can be a major setback, but you must be able to adapt, remodel, and continue to thrive.

Cultural barriers often stem from uncertainty, lack of understanding, and questions about the product. These concerns usually ease over time as clarity improves.

Running two companies demands balance. How do you stay grounded when pressure begins to affect clarity?

As much as possible, I don't allow myself to become overly pressured. I delegate effectively and avoid trying to do everything myself—that's why I have a team and systems in place to reduce pressure.

I also listen to good music to keep my mind calm, focused, and clear. As they say, music is food for the soul and the mind.

Public recognition can shift expectations. How do you keep your attention on long-term impact rather than visibility?

My focus has always been on the game, and it still is. My energy is channelled toward the impact we create, which ultimately drives performance. Results are evidence of hard work.

I focus on outcomes, and I don't allow distractions to divert my attention.

Many people will rely on the systems you are building. How does that responsibility influence the choices you make today?

It creates a strong user-first mindset and shapes how our solutions and products are built and developed. We actively leverage user feedback and input to guide product iteration and development.

A close-up portrait of Frankie Walter, a Black man with a short, light-colored haircut and a goatee. He is wearing a blue and black patterned shirt and a large, dark, circular earring. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a thoughtful expression.

FRANKIE WALTER: TELLING HUMAN STORIES THROUGH SOULFUL SOUNDS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



The first thing you notice about Frankie Walter's music is not volume or urgency, but feeling. His sound arrives gently, like a familiar voice humming in the background of a memory you did not know you were holding onto. It is music that breathes, pauses, and listens, inviting the listener into something intimate and unmistakably human.

Frankie Walter is a Nigerian singer, songwriter, and seasoned voice actor whose work lives at the intersection of music, film, and emotional

storytelling. Known for his soulful tone, he creates soundtracks for love stories, music that captures connection, longing, tenderness, and the unspoken moments between people. His songs are reflective and heartfelt, often carrying the emotional weight of lived experiences. Whether through melody or silence, his work invites listeners into moments that feel familiar and deeply personal.

That sensitivity emerged early. "My journey in music began long before I ever thought of it as a career," Frankie says. "I'm a preacher's kid, and growing up, music was always present in my life. Singing early on helped me understand emotion and storytelling through sound."

Some of his earliest influences came from home. He recalls watching his father sing, moved not just by the sound but by the emotion behind it. "Hearing my dad sing as a child was everything to me, the emotion, the soul, the way he told stories through sound. Till today, my dad is a storyteller. Music has always been his language."

That storytelling tradition went further back. During festive visits home, Frankie's late grandfather would gather the family at night, playing the ubo, a local thumb piano, while sharing stories about his life and experiences during the Biafra war. "Those moments stayed with me," Frankie says.

Music also became a way to process loss. Frankie's late sister, Miracle, expressed herself through music, and her passing 16 years ago marked a turning point. "I made a promise to myself that every time I sing, I do it for her as well," he shares. Over time, listeners began to respond deeply to his voice. "They often said things like, 'Your voice heals.' That was when I realized music wasn't just something I loved, it was something that made people feel better."

Frankie is soul-driven. "If I don't feel it, I won't sing it," he says. Inspired by artists like Tracy Chapman and Boyz II Men, he focuses on honesty and emotional depth. "I focus more on how a sound feels than how loud it is, letting the story lead the music rather than the other way around."

His work as a voice actor has shaped his awareness of tone, pacing, and intention. His voice has featured in campaigns for Value Jet Airline, BetWinner Naija, and Jaiz Bank. "Voice acting has sharpened my awareness of tone, pacing, and emotional intention," he says. "Both worlds rely on storytelling."

Frankie has also composed soundtracks for films, most recently *To Adaego With Love*, set to release on February 6. The film marks the final movie appearance of veteran Onyeka Onwenu. "I approach the project with reverence," he says. "My goal is always to support the story without overpowering it, to create sounds that linger quietly."

In a music industry increasingly shaped by speed and spectacle, Frankie Walter has taken a slower, more reflective path. His songs unfold with care, letting listeners inhabit the spaces between notes. "I don't try to dramatize experiences; I try to tell the truth gently," he says. "Most of my songs come from real-life events... one man's story is several other people's story."

Frankie does not speak often about legacy. For him, the work is simpler and harder than that, listening closely, telling the truth gently, and trusting that if a sound is honest enough, it will find the people who need it.



KEMI ADEOSUN'S QUIET RETURN WITH NIDACITY

ABIOLA YUSUF





When Kemi Adeosun resigned as Nigeria's Minister of Finance in September 2018, it closed one of the most consequential and controversial chapters in the economic management of the Muhammadu Buhari administration.

Appointed in 2015 at a time of profound economic uncertainty, Adeosun entered office as Nigeria confronted collapsing oil prices, dwindling foreign reserves and a fragile fiscal structure heavily dependent on crude revenue.

Her exit, triggered by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) certificate controversy, was sudden and deeply personal. Within weeks, she left Nigeria for the United Kingdom, choosing silence over spectacle as public debate raged. Yet behind the scenes, Adeosun was preparing a legal defence that would eventually clear her name.

Before the controversy, Adeosun had been one of the most influential architects of Nigeria's economic response to recession.

As Finance Minister, she inherited an economy reeling from the 2014 oil price crash. Government revenues had plunged, states were struggling to pay salaries, and Nigeria would soon slide into its first recession in over two decades. Adeosun's tenure was defined by attempts to stabilise public finances in an era of scarcity rather than abundance.

One of her early interventions was the Budget Support Facility for states, a lifeline that helped subnational governments meet salary obligations and avert social unrest. At the federal level, she championed fiscal discipline, pushing for tighter expenditure controls and improved transparency in public finance management.

Perhaps her most enduring policy legacy was the Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS), launched in 2017. VAIDS marked Nigeria's most aggressive attempt at broadening the tax base, targeting chronic tax evasion among high-net-worth individuals and companies.

Though controversial, the scheme significantly increased non-oil revenue and altered national conversations around tax compliance and civic responsibility.

Adeosun also played a central role in stabilising the economy after Nigeria slid into recession following the dramatic plunge in global oil prices to as low as \$28 per barrel. Confronted with collapsing revenues and mounting fiscal pressure, she championed structural reforms aimed at restoring confidence and improving efficiency in government.

Under her watch, technology-driven payroll audits led to the elimination of thousands of ghost workers across the public sector, saving billions of naira in recurrent expenditure.

She also strengthened the Efficiency Unit within the Ministry of Finance to curb wasteful spending, enforce value-for-money principles and plug revenue leakages.

In parallel, the whistleblower policy was introduced to encourage citizen participation in the fight against corruption, resulting in the recovery of significant sums of public funds and signalling a tougher stance on fiscal accountability.

Her tenure also coincided with a shift in Nigeria's debt strategy. Adeosun advocated for greater reliance on long-term, concessionary borrowing to fund infrastructure, arguing that Nigeria's problem was not debt size but revenue weakness. Under her watch, the government sought to rebalance domestic and external debt and improve debt sustainability metrics.

By the time Nigeria officially exited recession in 2017, the economy was far from robust, but it had stabilised. Growth returned, inflation began to moderate, and fiscal systems showed early signs of reform. For supporters, Adeosun represented technocratic competence in a difficult period. For critics, her policies were cautious, sometimes slow, and constrained by political realities.

That period, however, was followed by events that brought her public service to an abrupt end.

Following her resignation, Adeosun returned to the UK and focused on clearing her name through legal channels. Years later, a court of competent jurisdiction vindicated her, ruling that she had no case to answer in relation to the certificate matter. By then, however, she had already redirected her energy toward a different form of service.

In the UK, Adeosun founded DashMe Foundation, a philanthropic initiative focused on social mobility, education and empowerment. DashMe became an outlet for translating economic theory and policy experience into direct community impact, working with individuals often excluded from opportunity by circumstance rather than ability.

Those familiar with her post-government life say DashMe was both a personal healing process and a practical experiment, proof that development could be driven from the ground up, not only through national budgets and policy documents.

Today, Adeosun is preparing to take that philosophy further with Nigerian Audacity (NiDacity), a mentorship and capacity-building initiative aimed at young Nigerians navigating a fragile economy marked by inflation, unemployment and limited access to opportunity.

NiDacity is informed by her years in government by what she saw work, what failed, and where policy alone fell short.

"I'm also building something new, something focused on empowering Nigerians with knowledge, skills and access," Adeosun said. "I'll share more soon, but the heart of it is simple, helping people build better futures through practical tools and opportunities. We're looking at building capacity at scale."

Unlike traditional empowerment programmes, NiDacity is expected to focus on mindset, mentorship and skills transfer, areas Adeosun believes are essential complements to macroeconomic reform.

The initiative targets young people who must now succeed in an economy shaped by volatility, technology and global competition.

"My new project, NiDacity, is a new project to celebrate the things that make us a country with highest start up rate all over the world. The never say die, the can do spirit. We celebrate that edge that will make new businesses succeed," Adeosun said.

Her journey, from the centre of Nigeria's economic policymaking to a quieter, people-focused mission, reflects a broader truth about leadership and legacy. Public office can end abruptly, reputations can be tested, but service need not stop.

For Kemi Adeosun, NiDacity represents both a return to Nigeria's development conversation and a departure from politics as usual, one shaped not by titles or cabinet meetings, but by the audacity to believe that empowered citizens remain Nigeria's greatest economic asset.

ABIOLA YUSUF writes from Lagos

WHY YOUR BOARD NEEDS A PR PROFESSIONAL AT THE DECISION-MAKING TABLE

SATIRA OSEMUDIAMEN





The longer I practice public relations, the more I notice a set of traits settling into my reflexes: a sceptical edge, a protective instinct, constant curiosity and the habit of translating moments into outcomes. These qualities define the foundation of a PR professional trained through repetition, exposure and crisis, allowing us to anticipate consequences rather than merely react to events.

At its most basic, the human brain seeks patterns and meaning. The brain of a PR professional applies that instinct with strategic purpose. We think in

terms of outcomes and reason in parallel, incorporating emotion, survival instincts and logic. In practical terms, a seasoned PR professional speaks to what people feel, protects against how they react under threat, and satisfies what will stand up to scrutiny.

A recent incident with a friend illustrates this instinct perfectly. She mentioned a man who had asked her out. My first question: "What is his full name?" I asked whether she had checked him out, not to be dramatic, but because pattern recognition is my default. From how he presented himself in messages and the cadence of his approach, I could already map out likely outcomes. I warned her. Some call that being critical. I call it responsible foresight.

That instinct is precisely why PR and strategic communications professionals should be in business decision-making rooms. In 2026, a year defined by digital permanence, generative AI and instantaneous amplification, reputation management cannot be an afterthought. Boards and executive teams that treat PR as a vendor and brief after decisions expose themselves to avoidable risk. Those who sit with their PR teams at the strategy table gain clarity, control and competitive advantage.

Here is what that placement actually delivers:

Outcome-Focused Decision Making

When PR enters the late stage, campaigns become tactical and short-lived. Embedded PR transforms messaging into an operating function: narrative architecture from conception through distribution, sequencing that sustains interest, and controls that mitigate risk. The difference is measurable: a brief spike versus durable performance.

Metrics That Actually Matter

Impressions are easy to count; impact is harder to measure. A strong public relations function establishes outcomes that support organisational objectives: stakeholder engagement, trust metrics, message retention among key audiences, and quantifiable impacts on decision-making. That forces accountability and enables timely course corrections.

Reputation as Commercial Capital

Your executives and managers are invaluable public-facing assets. A thoughtfully managed public persona transforms stakeholder goodwill into lucrative partnerships, compelling endorsements and prime market access. Neglect that asset and it depreciates. Invest in it, and it appreciates. Executives who recognise this importance often engage publicists, legal advisors, coaches and therapists to ensure consistency and protect future opportunities.

Narrative Construction, Not Noise

A single misaligned message can trigger a cascade of reputational harm. Narratives are inherently social and challenging to alter once established. Every public action warrants assessment for permanence, media impact, cultural sensitivity and legal implications.

Thoughtful narrative design provides the sturdy framework needed to craft a compelling and resilient story.

Reputation is a Long Game

What separates a temporary setback from lasting derailment is the strength of your reputation architecture. A robust long-term reputation strategy absorbs shocks, contextualises missteps, and redirects focus to the organisation's core mission. It requires patience from leadership and openness to strategic guidance, principles that transform challenges into opportunities for renewal.

Creativity Tethered to Outcomes

Viral moments and clever activations are tools; untethered, they are fleeting. PR-driven creativity must deepen the story your organisation wants to own and connect to measurable objectives. The best creative work reduces uncertainty about how audiences will interpret a message and increases the likelihood of desired behaviour.

If boards and senior teams view reputation as a strategic priority, they must take these practical steps:

Integrate Senior PR Counsel: Include senior public relations advisors in strategy meetings, risk committees, and Merger and Acquisition discussions.

Reputation often becomes mission-critical during periods of change; address it proactively.

Establish Measurable Outcome Plans: Require measurable plans linked to strategic objectives for every major initiative, including benchmarks for reputation health, stakeholder engagement and message effectiveness.

Allocate PR Budget as Core Operating Expense: Treat public relations funding as essential operations, not optional marketing expenditure.

Conduct Reputation Stress Tests: Include reputation assessments in scenario planning. Run narrative tests for three- and five-year forecasts alongside financial projections.

Staff Public-Facing Leaders with Professional Support: Ensure C-suite executives who interact with the public receive dedicated support from the PR team. Public roles demand consistent behaviour, and trained professionals ensure that predictability.

The primary role of a PR practitioner is to protect organisational value over time. It requires a specific mindset: a willingness to be critical, the ability to translate risks into concrete outcomes, and the discipline to demand measurable plans. Boards should welcome this critical perspective and ensure PR has a seat at the decision-making table.

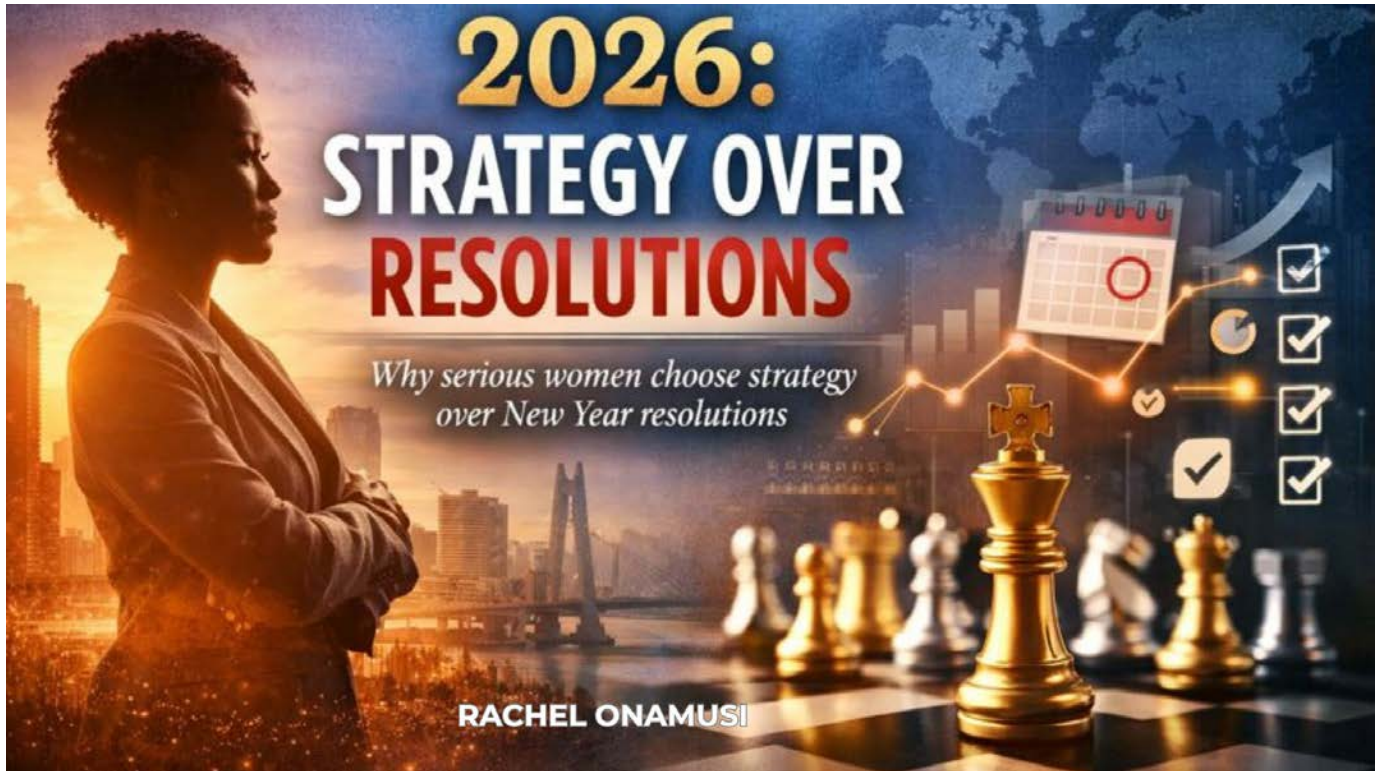
In today's landscape, leadership is assessed not just by boardroom performance, but by how well organisational intentions align with public perception. PR is the discipline that fosters this alignment. When treated as a strategic function, it brings clarity, credibility and control. Neglected, it becomes a risk to an asset that can quickly diminish in value. Listen to constructive criticism from your own team. When feedback is thoughtful and thorough, it preserves long-term value. Give your PR team the necessary authority, budget and a seat at the table. The framework they create will distinguish between fleeting headlines and lasting trust.

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2026: STRATEGY OVER RESOLUTIONS

...WHY SERIOUS WOMEN CHOOSE STRATEGY OVER NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

RACHEL ONAMUSI



If you've been following me for a while, you'll know that I don't make New Year's resolutions or recommend them. I think we attach far too much importance to the arbitrary structuring of the Gregorian calendar. If you have a bright idea in August, please start in August.

We should not need a fictional countdown further along in the year to do better, be better, or start something great.

But as I entered that strange twilight zone between Christmas and New Year's – the one where days blur and time loses meaning – I couldn't help but reflect on the things I'd like to do differently this year. And after getting over my initial shock at my own self-betrayal, the thought I was left with is: I want to make b*st*rd money this year.

And I am not changing that ambition. I'm talking about the kind of money that makes people ask if you won the lottery or if you have a calabash hidden somewhere in your wardrobe.

But this vague desire is exactly why I don't like New Year's resolutions – and why so many of them fall off within the first fortnight. Resolutions typically come with no systems, no metrics, no accountability, and no contingency for real life.

"This year, I'll save."

"This year, I'll start a business."

"This year, I want to lose weight."

Girl... how?

How many? How much? By when? To what end? How are you actually going to do it?

Resolutions are born from feelings.

They're a response to guilt, pressure, comparison, or January optimism. But to really get anything done in January and beyond, you're going to need strategy.

Strategy takes into account where you are, what you have, and the constraints you're working with. It then helps you put a plan together that discipline and willpower can realistically execute.

Anything else is just wishful thinking. And the more I think about it, the more I realise that perhaps there does need to be a point in the year where we stop, take stock, and deliberately map out the next 365 days. An opportunity to review our ambitions and modify them if needed – because ambition is good – great, even. And it's especially important for Nigerian women navigating career ceilings, financial pressure, and family or societal expectations.

Statistically, Nigerian women are a force in enterprise: eight out of every ten Nigerian women consider themselves entrepreneurs, with many juggling income-generating activities alongside their primary jobs, a clear signal that ambition is alive and well here.

You need something that wakes you up from the monotonous slog of "same thing, different day." Wishful thinking does that quite nicely. Dreaming starts the journey, yes. But doing is what gets you there.

The way we think about goals is what separates high-performing women from those who spend the year wringing their hands and wishing.

When a strategic woman sets a goal, she asks different questions:

What does success actually look like? (Be specific.)
 What will this cost me? (Time, money, energy.)
 What systems need to exist? (Support, skills, tools.)
 What might get in the way – and what's my Plan B?
 Take a financial goal, for example. "I want to make more money" is not a strategy. "I want to earn an additional ₦15 million this year" is a starting point. From there, the questions become unavoidable: Where is that money coming from: salary, business, investments, multiple streams? What skills need sharpening? What expenses need reducing? What systems need automating? And what happens if one income stream dries up?

Clarity forces honesty. And honesty forces better decisions. And this isn't just about money. I have a friend - let's call her Grace. Last January she said she wanted a promotion. Great. But her strategy was...hope. By March, she was frustrated. Until she rewrote her plan to include:

specific projects she needed to lead
 courses she needed to finish
 names she needed to network with
 a quarterly review with her mentor
 By July, she had the promotion on her CV.

Strategy brings action.

Willpower is unreliable. Motivation is fickle. Systems, on the other hand, are loyal. If you're serious about your life, you cannot rely on vibes. You're going to need structures. Calendars. Budgets. Processes. Routines.

"I'll try to save more" becomes "₦X automatically moves into a separate account on the 25th of every month."
 "I'll network more" becomes "Two intentional coffees or industry events a month."
 "I want to grow my business" becomes "Weekly lead tracking, monthly reviews, quarterly strategy resets."
 If your goal doesn't show up in your calendar or your bank statement, it's not a priority. You're still dreaming. Next, you have to give your strategy room to breathe.

High-performing women understand the need to review, reset and adjust. They don't abandon goals at the first sign of difficulty; they audit them. Monthly check-ins. Quarterly reviews. Annual recalibration. This is what progress looks like, and it doesn't always happen on January 1.

Especially in this unpredictable economy, flexibility is not weakness, it's leadership.

So, if you're feeling overwhelmed, here's a simple strategic roadmap for 2026:

Choose one primary focus for the year. Not everything at once.

Define success in numbers or outcomes, not feelings. Build two or three non-negotiable systems that support that goal. Schedule regular reviews. Yes, actually put them in your calendar. Secure accountability, whether through a person, a structure, or a community. Ladies, dreaming is for non-starters. Doing is for achievers.

When we talk about self-leadership, this is what we mean: taking our wild, ambitious thoughts and fitting them into structurally sound leadership frameworks – and then setting them up to succeed, the same way we would at work or in our businesses. This 2026, perhaps the resolution is not to make louder or newer resolutions, but simply better decisions.

For me, I will be starting with one question: How exactly am I going to make this b*st*r'd money?

Rachel Onamusi is the CEO of VN Sync, a UK-based tech company and full-service marketing firm with expertise in all aspects of media and a strong focus on digital strategy development and implementation. Dedicated to creating lasting impact, Ms. Onamusi is a sought-after speaker, thought leader, writer and frequent media contributor.

WHEN LOGIC ISN'T ENOUGH: HOW MALE ALLYSHIP REDISTRIBUTES EMOTIONAL LABOUR

EKEMINI AKPAKPAN

Emotional labour involves recognising emotions, naming them, and responding in ways that allow relationships and institutions to function. It includes smoothing conflict, anticipating emotional needs, holding space for difficult conversations, and ensuring emotional continuity over time.

Emotional labour is essential to society.

Relationships, families, and workplaces do not function on logic alone; they are sustained by emotional regulation, empathy, and care. Every system that depends on human interaction relies on someone doing the work of noticing emotional dynamics, managing tensions, and maintaining trust.

When Emotional Labour Becomes Harmful

The problem is not emotional labour itself, but its unequal distribution. When emotional labour is shared and recognised, it strengthens relationships and organisations. When it is taken for granted, it becomes a quiet burden. This is where emotional labour becomes gendered; women are expected to manage the emotional consequences of others' discomfort with emotion.

How Allyship Can Prevent Emotional Labour

Many men are encouraged to approach work and relationships through logic, restraint, and emotional control. These traits are often associated with professionalism and leadership, particularly in workplace settings. While they may support focus and decisiveness, at their worst, these traits limit emotional engagement rather than strengthen it. Emotional restraint is not the same as emotional competence.

When emotions are left unnamed or unprocessed, they continue to influence behaviour, communication, and conflict, often in indirect ways. Silence, dismissiveness, or disengagement may reduce immediate discomfort, but they rarely lead to resolution.

In these moments, emotional labour does not disappear. It shifts. Someone must still name what went wrong and hold the tension. Constructive allyship here is not about abandoning logic or indulging unfiltered emotion. It is about emotional responsibility; the willingness to stay engaged, to recognise emotional dynamics, and to participate in resolving them rather than stepping away from them.

When emotional responsibility is shared, working relationships become more resilient, conflict becomes more productive, and collaboration improves for everyone.

How Emotional Labor Often Plays Out

I recently observed a workplace disagreement between two colleagues — one male, one female. Both left the interaction dissatisfied, with the core issue unresolved. Emotions were clearly present on both sides. The difference lay in how those emotions were handled.

The man's response was dismissiveness — withdrawing from engagement and minimising the emotional dimension of the disagreement. The woman, left without resolution, absorbed the emotional tension until it eventually surfaced as frustration.

Dismissiveness is not emotional maturity; it is an avoidance strategy. And when one person disengages emotionally, someone else must carry the unresolved weight of the interaction. Over time, this dynamic is deeply unproductive. It preserves the appearance of professionalism while undermining trust, collaboration, and honest problem-solving.

How Shared Emotional Labour Strengthens Work Relationships

1. Conflict Resolution

When emotional labour is shared, conflict is addressed rather than avoided or absorbed. Parties are more likely to name tensions early, listen without defensiveness, and stay engaged long enough to reach a resolution.

This prevents issues from resurfacing repeatedly and reduces the emotional cost of unresolved disagreements. Shared emotional responsibility turns conflict into a tool for clarity, not a threat to harmony.

2. Collaboration

Effective collaboration depends on psychological safety — the sense that ideas can be expressed without ridicule or dismissal. Shared emotional labour ensures that no single person is responsible for maintaining this safety. When team members collectively regulate tone, respond respectfully, and acknowledge impact, collaboration becomes more honest, inclusive, and productive.

3. Trust-Building

Trust is built not only through competence, but through consistency and emotional reliability. When emotional labour is evenly distributed, colleagues experience follow-through, accountability, and mutual respect. Trust erodes when one person repeatedly absorbs tension while others disengage. Shared emotional labour makes trust a collective outcome, not an individual sacrifice.

4. Expectations Management

Many workplace conflicts stem from misaligned expectations that go unspoken. Emotional labour plays a role in naming assumptions, clarifying boundaries, and recalibrating roles when circumstances change. When this work is shared, expectations are surfaced earlier and adjusted collaboratively, reducing resentment and miscommunication.

5. Productive Communication

Productive communication requires more than clarity of content; it requires attention to tone, timing, and impact. Shared emotional labour allows conversations to remain direct without becoming dismissive, and honest without becoming hostile. This creates space for feedback that improves performance rather than damaging relationships.

6. Decision-Making Quality

When emotional dynamics are acknowledged, decisions benefit from fuller participation and less post-decision resistance.

People are more likely to support outcomes they feel heard in, even when their preferred option is not chosen.

Shared emotional labour ensures buy-in is built alongside logic.

7. Retention and Engagement

Workplaces where emotional labour is recognised and distributed more fairly experience lower burnout and higher engagement, particularly among women. Employees are more likely to stay in environments where emotional effort is not invisibly extracted or taken for granted.

8. Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership is not just about direction-setting; it is about holding people through change, uncertainty, and pressure. Leaders who share emotional labour model emotional responsibility, set healthier norms, and reduce reliance on informal, gendered emotional work within teams.

9. Reputation and Culture

Over time, how emotional labour is handled shapes organisational culture.

Teams that distribute emotional responsibility fairly develop reputations for respect, fairness, and professionalism. This strengthens internal culture and external credibility.

Final Thoughts

Sharing emotional labour does not require abandoning professionalism or indulging emotional immaturity. It requires emotional competence: the ability to stay engaged in difficult conversations, to name tensions rather than avoid them, and to recognise that unresolved emotions shape outcomes whether they are acknowledged or not.

As conversations around gender equity and male allyship evolve, emotional responsibility must be part of the discussion. Not as a moral demand, but as a leadership skill and an organisational asset. When emotional labour is recognised and more evenly distributed, workplaces become more resilient, decisions more durable, and relationships more productive.

WHY MANY NIGERIAN CEOS REMAIN INVISIBLE DESPITE BUSINESS SUCCESS – KEHINDE AJOSE

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Despite running profitable companies and driving significant economic impact, many Nigerian CEOs, senior executives, and entrepreneurs remain largely invisible in public and industry conversations — a gap experts say limits influence, credibility, and long-term relevance.

Speaking in an interview, Kehinde Ajose, founder of Visibility Solutions Media (VSM), said the problem is not a lack of achievement but a widespread misunderstanding of visibility among top executives.

“Many Nigerian CEOs confuse silence with sophistication,” Ajose said. “They believe low visibility signals power, wealth, or seriousness.

In reality, silence creates a vacuum, and in Nigeria, that vacuum is quickly filled with speculation, misinformation, and proxy narratives. When leaders avoid media until there is a crisis, they surrender narrative control.

In a high-context environment like Nigeria, absence is interpreted, not ignored.”

Ajose highlighted that executives often appear only through press releases, award citations, or company statements, rarely as thinking leaders. “This creates distance and weakens trust. Stakeholders want to hear how the leader thinks, not just what the company achieved.

When visibility is reduced to announcements, the CEO becomes a logo, not a leader, and authority becomes fragile.”

Fear of backlash or misinterpretation also keeps some leaders silent. “Out of fear of controversy, some play it too safe. They avoid taking clear positions or addressing nuanced topics. However, Nigeria’s business environment rewards clarity and conviction. Neutrality often reads as indecision, not wisdom.”

While many executives remain cautious, some Nigerian leaders show the power of deliberate visibility. For example, Femi Otedola blends updates on business milestones with family and lifestyle content on social media, projecting professional success and relatability.

Tony Elumelu shares insights on entrepreneurship and leadership to reinforce his status as a thought leader.

Ibukun Awosika leverages public speaking and thought leadership to connect deeply with professional audiences, particularly women in business.

Obi Cubana extends his reach through digital platforms, including YouTube, blending business, lifestyle, and cultural content to engage a broader audience.

It is within this context that Visibility Solutions Media developed the Audacious

Visibility Programme, described by Ajose as a C-suite executive narrative architecture designed for CEOs, founders, and senior leaders seeking authority, trust, and long-term influence.

“The programme is not about chasing publicity or jumping on trends,” Ajose said. “It is about helping leaders articulate their voice, define their positioning, and show up consistently in spaces that matter to their business and legacy.”

He added that many executives delay visibility until a crisis, funding round, or major announcement forces them into the public eye — often unprepared.

“Visibility should be proactive, not reactive. When leaders own their narrative early, they shape perception before the market does it for them.”

Ajose also highlighted measurable benefits of visibility. According to Golin’s 2024 CEO Impact Index, the top 50 most visible CEOs achieved 80 percent higher average annual share-price growth than their peers, demonstrating that executive visibility isn’t merely branding — it directly affects business outcomes.

“As Nigeria’s business landscape becomes more competitive and media-driven, executive visibility has shifted from a personal choice to a leadership responsibility,” Ajose said.

“Leaders who communicate clearly and consistently are more likely to build credibility, attract strategic opportunities, and maintain influence beyond short-term business cycles.”

9 PM IN FARFALLINO

ESTHER EMOEKPERE AND OLUWATOSIN OGUNJUYIGBE



...Inside a Lagos-based Italian restaurant where everything is imported, and nothing is advertised

The first thing you notice about Farfallino isn't a sign. There isn't one, really. No bold lettering announcing itself to Victoria Island's traffic, no banner — nothing. It's carefully tucked inside the famous Black Diamond Hotel, like a secret waiting to be discovered.

This is intentional. Marc Doumit, the Group Food and Beverage Manager, will disclose later that they've never advertised any of their restaurants. "Once the door opens, we allow people to find us," he says. Premium service, he believes, is the best advertisement. Word of mouth will take care of the rest.

It's 9 pm on a Lagos evening, and inside, the space feels deliberately uncrowded. Of the 170 seats in the main dining room where everything: plates, tables, flooring, even the light fixtures, has been shipped from Italy, perhaps forty are occupied. The outdoor area, with space for another fifty diners, an ocean view and a shisha spot, hosts a handful of groups. Yet no one thinks this is emptiness; it's exclusivity by design,

the kind of place where slippers and unbuttoned shirts won't get you past the host stand.

Chuks, our waiter, has his name embroidered on his apron. He moves with the practised efficiency of someone trained not just to serve but to understand what he's serving. "The calamari," he explains, setting down the Calamari Alla Romana, "is fried Roman-style." The rings arrive golden, tender, accompanied by tartar sauce that hasn't been sitting in a squeeze bottle. This is part of what Bernard Zatar, Farfallino's manager, means when he describes their training philosophy: servers here learn to help guests understand the menu, then give them space to enjoy the experience.

The complimentary bread arrives warm. Then the Avocado Ripieno—avocado halves filled with tomato, chicken, lemon mayonnaise, fresh basil, and parmesan. It's a small thing, but it signals something larger about Farfallino's approach: taking Italian technique and adjusting it for Nigerian preferences. "We had to curate a menu that feeds the Nigerian taste," Marc explains between courses. "A bit spicy, reduced cheese, more protein."





This is the calculus of running an Italian restaurant 4,000 miles from Bologna. Everything in Farfallino's kitchen—every bottle of olive oil, every anchovy, every grain of arborio rice—arrives by air freight from Italy. The pasta isn't dried and boxed; it's made fresh daily in a machine imported for that purpose. The wines can't be found anywhere else in Lagos. Even the two head chefs are Italian, along with the pizzaiolo who works the pizza station.

"A real Italian restaurant," Marc says, "starts from decoration, utilities, products, food, wine, and who is cooking. Farfallino has it all."

But this authenticity comes with complications. The imported ingredients have short lifespans. Severe weather affecting flights means supplies don't arrive. And these aren't items

readily available at Lagos markets. Most suppliers won't risk stocking expensive, perishable goods that might spoil. For a fifteen-month-old restaurant that values its reputation, one bad review could undo everything. So they don't compromise.

The Pizza Margherita arrives at the table: tomato sauce, mozzarella, basil. The crust has that characteristic Italian char and chew. Chuks doesn't hover; he's learned the fine dining rhythm of appearing exactly when needed and disappearing when he's not. This is different from how servers operate at Cactus or Salma's Terrace, the group's other establishments. Fine dining demands restraint, an understanding that diners have paid not just for food but for time and space to enjoy it.

The main courses tell the story of adaptation more clearly. The Linguine Puttanesca comes properly spicy—olive oil, garlic, parsley, capers, anchovy fillets, black olives in a chilli tomato sauce that would make a Neapolitan nonna nod in approval, but with enough heat to satisfy Nigerian palates. The Fettuccine con Panna e Prosciutto con Petto di Pollo (homemade fettuccine with cream, ham, chicken breast, and parmesan) is rich without being heavy. The roasted potato and chicken round out the table, straightforward and perfectly executed.

Between courses, Marc and Bernard sketch out the broader picture. They're part of Rocky Sporting Club, a hospitality group approaching forty years of existence. Their portfolio includes Black Diamond Hotel with its continental and intercontinental dining rooms, Cactus Restaurant (their oldest operating establishment, opened in 1998), Salma's Terrace (a Lebanese restaurant serving oil companies onshore and offshore), MBS Suites, and Kallos Spa. Farfallino is the newest addition, barely fifteen months old.

"Running a restaurant is risky," Bernard says. "Most shut down after some years. The strategy is to maintain the same standard—not just the food, but everything. Hygiene, the work model, staff training, and motivation." At Cactus, he notes, 160 staff members include more than ten dedicated solely to hygiene and HSE. "The secret of a successful restaurant is to continue how you start."



The Nigerian population in Italy is substantial. As of 2023, there were 99,630 Nigerians in the country, and many often return home craving the food they had there. Farfallino provides that. They have the same meals, the same wines, the same experience. They've even catered weddings for couples who want the Italian experience without the transatlantic flight.

Dessert arrives: Tiramisu al Cioccolato with chocolate mascarpone cream, Savoyard biscuit, coffee, chocolate drops, and cocoa powder; and Cheesecake all'Italiana, a baked creamy Italian cheesecake with a choice of caramel, chocolate, or strawberry sauce.

By the time we leave, just before midnight, the dining room maintains its studied emptiness—perhaps a third full, perhaps less. Chuku has been attentive without being intrusive, appearing to clear plates and refresh drinks with timing that suggests careful training. The bill, when it comes, isn't exactly cheap. Bernard was frank about that earlier: "Farfallino is not a cheap restaurant, but not an expensive one either. Diners get value for what they pay for."

The question of what success looks like in ten or twenty years hangs in the air. Farfallino chose a city where restaurants open and close with alarming frequency, supply chains are unpredictable and operating

costs are high. Yet it refuses to join the advertising lottery. "Social media hype usually brings temporary customers", Marc says. "It's always better to let them find you themselves. They become more loyal that way."

Marc seems confident in this approach, saying it has worked time and again with their other successful establishments.

Outside, Lagos continues its endless hum. You come out to see everyone screaming at you to notice them. And it suddenly hits us that Farfallino's silence might be its loudest statement.

The drinks arrive throughout the evening: a Tramonto with Bacardi Carta Oro, Campari, pineapple, cinnamon syrup, and lemon juice; a classic Bellini; a Negroni that tastes like it was mixed in a Milanese bar; a Virgin Colada for those abstaining. The cocktail program, like everything else, doesn't cut corners.

What becomes clear over the course of the evening is that Farfallino exists at an intersection: between fine dining standards and accessible hospitality, between imported authenticity and local reality. "Nigerians are very open-minded people," Marc observes. "They love discovering and trying new cultures."

HOW ETNOWE IS EXPANDING ACCESS TO AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN FOOD THROUGH NICHE DELIVERY PLATFORM

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Access to African and Caribbean food in the United States has long depended on distance. Many families travel across cities to buy familiar groceries or rely on a small number of restaurants that serve food close to what they grew up eating. For years, that access has been shaped less by technology and more by community knowledge—who sells what, and where.

ETNOWE, pronounced “Eat-Now,” is one of the platforms attempting to formalise that informal system. Founded in 2021 by Nigerian-born entrepreneur Ebenezer Oyinlade, the U.S.-based digital marketplace and delivery platform focuses on African and Caribbean groceries and restaurant meals.

The idea emerged during the pandemic, when accessing cultural foods became increasingly difficult for immigrant families. ETNOWE officially launched in selected neighbourhoods in 2022, connecting customers to local ethnic grocery stores and restaurants through a single app.

The platform was built to address two problems: limited access for customers and limited digital reach for community-owned stores and kitchens. Many small ethnic stores and restaurants operate with thin margins and limited digital infrastructure.

ETNOWE works directly with these businesses, offering delivery services and merchant tools tailored to their operations rather than forcing them into generic systems.

Between 2023 and 2024, ETNOWE expanded into six U.S. states, onboarded more than 30 grocery stores and restaurants, and processed over 10,000 orders.

In 2025, the company launched ETNOWE Chops, a restaurant delivery arm focused on ready-to-eat meals, and began developing additional tools to help merchants manage inventory, orders, and direct communication with customers. As of 2026, the platform operates across Texas, Maryland, Georgia, and Indiana, with significant activity in cities such as Dallas and Washington, D.C. The platform offers same-day delivery for groceries and meals, typically within two to four hours, and positions itself as a lower-cost alternative to mainstream food delivery services.

In January 2026, ETNOWE raised \$300,000 in pre-seed funding from a group of early backers. This funding will support the next phase of growth, enabling the platform to scale to 100,000 users, onboard more than 200 restaurants and grocery stores, and strengthen its engineering, growth, and operations teams over the next 12 to 18 months.

The pre-seed investment will also help the company develop further tools for merchants and expand delivery coverage to additional neighbourhoods.

The company operates within the U.S. ethnic food and grocery market, which generated an estimated \$50 billion in revenue last year and continues to grow alongside diaspora populations.

By focusing on underserved African and Caribbean communities and offering improved economics for both consumers and merchants, ETNOWE aims to capture a meaningful share of this expanding market.

Oyinlade says the platform is designed as infrastructure for Africa's diaspora, connecting immigrants and second-generation Africans to local restaurants and grocery stores that provide the flavours of home. The company also plans to pursue a larger institutional funding round in 2027.

"African and Caribbean food is widely available in the U.S., but the technology serving these businesses has not caught up," said Oyinlade. "We are building ETNOWE for people who know exactly what they want."

The company's early growth has been entirely organic, with thousands of orders processed without prior marketing or external capital, demonstrating sustained demand for a culturally specific delivery service.

ETNOWE's focus on cultural authenticity and digital access highlights a gap in the mainstream food delivery market, offering a model for how technology can better serve diaspora communities while supporting local Black- and immigrant-owned businesses.

THE THREE LARGEST COUNTRIES IN AFRICA BY LAND AREA

CHISOM MICHAEL



Africa, the world's second-largest continent after Asia, is home to 54 countries recognised by the United Nations and the African Union. Stretching across diverse landscapes and climates, the continent is divided into several geographic and political zones.

Many of Africa's modern borders are a legacy of the Berlin Conference and the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century, when European powers carved up territories with little regard for the continent's ethnic, cultural, and social realities. As a result, today's borders reflect historical decisions made over a century ago rather than the natural evolution of African societies.

While population and economy often dominate discussions about African nations, land area provides another lens to understand the continent's scale. Algeria currently holds the title of the largest country by land, followed closely by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan. These nations highlight the logistical and governance challenges that come with managing vast territories, from infrastructure to resource distribution.

Africa's borders and country sizes are not static; wars, independence movements, and political agreements have shaped, and may continue to shape, the map of the continent. Examining Africa through land area offers a unique perspective on its diversity,

geography, and the daily realities of life across its expansive nations.

Currently, the three largest countries in Africa by land area are Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan.

1. Algeria

Algeria is the largest country in Africa, covering a total area of 2,381,741 square kilometres. The country has a population of 47 million people. Most of Algeria's population lives in the northern part of the country, while the southern region stretches deep into the Sahara Desert. The capital city, Algiers, is also the largest in the country. It has a long history and is over a thousand years old. Algeria's government, economy, and infrastructure are concentrated in the north, whereas the south remains sparsely populated.



2. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo occupies the second-largest area in Africa, covering 2,344,858 square kilometres, which represents 7.7 per cent of the continent's

land. The DRC is located on the equator and features a hot, humid, and tropical climate. Over half of the country's land is covered by dense rainforest. The population of the DRC is approximately 109 million people. In terms of population, it ranks fourth in Africa, behind Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Egypt. The country's geography and climate influence both agriculture and transportation, making access to certain regions challenging.



3. Sudan

Sudan ranks third in terms of land area in Africa, covering 1,861,484 square kilometres. The country accounts for 6.2 per cent of the continent's landmass. Sudan has a population of 50 million people, placing it eighth in Africa by population. The country became independent on 1 January 1956, but the region has a long history that includes the Kingdom of Kush, which once conquered Egypt over two thousand years ago. Until 2011, Sudan was the largest country in Africa. This changed when South Sudan gained independence after a civil war. The separation of South Sudan significantly reduced Sudan's land area but left it among the continent's largest countries.

10 SKILLS YOU CAN LEARN IN 30 DAYS TO EARN INCOME

CHISOM MICHAEL



Acquiring high-income skills no longer requires years of training. Many individuals are discovering methods to learn marketable skills within weeks, enabling them to start earning quickly.

These skills, which include areas like digital marketing, coding, and copywriting, can be applied immediately for freelance work, remote opportunities, or entrepreneurial ventures. Consistent practice and focused effort enhance

proficiency and increase professional prospects.

Experts note that dedicating time to a single skill accelerates learning and creates new income streams. With accessible online resources and practical training, developing lucrative abilities in a short time is now a realistic goal.

Here are ten skills you can learn in 30 days and start earning from

1. Copywriting

Copywriting involves writing text that persuades people to take action. This could include website content, product descriptions, or sales emails. Learning copywriting helps you understand how businesses communicate with customers. Beginners can start taking on small projects immediately.

2. Social media management

Social media management covers creating content, scheduling posts, and engaging with followers. Businesses often lack the knowledge to grow their platforms on Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok. A basic understanding of content calendars, captions, graphics, and engagement strategies allows beginners to manage clients' accounts.

3. Canva design

Canva is a tool that allows users to create designs without advanced software skills. It can be used to make logos, social media posts, e-books, and advertisements. Beginners can start taking on small design projects as soon as they learn the basics.

4. Basic video editing

Short-form video content is in demand on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Tools like CapCut or InShot are simple to learn and allow beginners to start editing videos quickly.

5. Email marketing

Email marketing involves writing messages that encourage recipients to act, such as buying a product or signing up for a service. Common tasks include newsletters, product launches, and follow-up sequences. Beginners can begin handling small campaigns after learning the fundamentals.

6. ChatGPT prompting and AI automation

AI tools like ChatGPT, Notion AI, and Zapier can automate tasks, generate content, and manage workflows. Learning how to use these tools is becoming a high-demand skill. Companies are increasingly seeking people who can integrate AI solutions into business processes.

7. UX writing

UX writers create text that guides users through apps, websites, and digital products. This includes button labels, instructions, onboarding flows, and tooltips. Clear UX writing improves the user experience and can be a valuable skill for freelancers.

8. Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing involves recommending products or services and earning commissions for sales. A large audience is not necessary; a clear content strategy and choice of the right products can generate income within weeks.

9. Personal branding

Personal branding is the process of creating an online identity and building trust with a niche audience. This includes posting content, interacting with followers, and developing expertise in a specific area. Effective personal branding can open doors to freelance projects, partnerships, and sponsorships.

10. Freelancing

Freelancing is the practice of offering services to clients independently. Learning how to pitch, negotiate, deliver work, and manage clients is essential. Starting with one skill from this list allows individuals to build multiple income streams over time.

NO GROWTH WITHOUT TALENT: RETHINKING NIGERIA'S EXPATRIATE POLICY

CHARLES OGWO



Nigeria's ambition for sustained economic growth is colliding with an uncomfortable reality: critical skills are in short supply.

From advanced engineering to digital technology and industrial manufacturing, the gap between what the economy needs and what the labour market can supply continues to widen.

In this context, restrictive expatriate policies risk slowing growth rather than protecting jobs, raising urgent questions about whether Nigeria's current approach to foreign talent aligns with its development goals.

With local talent pipelines unable to keep pace, employers turn to foreign expatriates, as over 150,000 non-Nigerians occupy critical professional roles.

According to a report by GetBundi in 2023, an online education technology outfit, about 85 percent of Nigerian graduates have no digital skills.

Osita Oparaugo, the CEO at GetBundi emphasised that the outcome of the survey shows that more than 100 million young people are not prepared to take up good job opportunities that require such modern skills. "There is an overwhelming digital skills gap that has been linked to the high unemployment rate in Nigeria.

"The lack of digital skills has been named as a major reason why many graduates produced yearly from the country's tertiary institutions are unable to secure employment in the labour market," he noted.

Not less than 3,243 foreign employees were employed in Standard Bank Group in 2024. The Dangote refinery at the peak of construction in the refinery complex in 2023 employed 6,400 Indians and 3,250 Chinese skilled-workers.

As the global labour trend evolves, driven by technological disruption, demographic shifts, and the green transition, experts advocate that Nigeria must urgently invest in human capital and tweak its expatriate policy for more experts to come in to remain competitive.



Uchenna Uzo, a faculty director at Lagos Business School (LBS), said the skills gap menace is rooted in the fact that Nigeria's tertiary education system in the technical area does not expose the students enough into industrial practice before they graduate.

"People learn the theory of engineering, and technical work, but when it comes to the real practice of it, there's a huge gap; and this is in a context where the students are required to do industrial internships, before they graduate.

"The problem is that the way the curriculum is structured and those internships are managed make it difficult," he said.

Nubi Achebo, director of academic planning at Nigerian University of Technology and Management (NUTM), highlights a significant gap between Nigeria's education system and industry needs.

"Many Nigerian graduates lack practical skills, making them unemployable despite having certificates.

"Nigerian workers may lack hands-on experience or specific skills required by industries such as oil refining," he noted.

Tayelolu Owadokun, recruitment manager at WAVE, said skills gap has widened, with 65 percent of Nigerian employers citing it as a barrier.

"I've seen many youth without core skills for available jobs, as unemployment persists.

"Youth often bypass skills acquisition, seeking high-paying jobs they're unqualified for, and employers prioritise top talent, sometimes opting for expatriates," Owadokun said.

Owadokun reiterated that employers are unwilling to compromise on skills, work-ready professionals; and this poses a

challenge as they search for youth with the right skill set.

"There's a mismatch between what employers seek and the skill set youth possess. Companies' reliance on foreign workers reflects this harsh reality.

"There is a great need for Nigerian youth to upskill to meet market demands," Owadokun stressed.

Recent data show that 65 percent of Nigerian employers cite skill shortages as a major barrier to transformation, especially in areas such as digital technologies, data analytics, and cybersecurity.

While developing local talent remains essential, strategic engagement with foreign expatriates, guided by a more friendly and pragmatic policy framework, can play a vital role in addressing the skills crisis and strengthening Nigeria's human capital.

Experts believe that Nigeria needs a more accessible policy that allows these experts to work in Nigeria, where genuinely needed, can prevent project delays, improve productivity, and attract further investment.

Obviously, Nigeria's growth ambitions cannot outpace the quality of its human capital. As long as critical skills remain scarce, rigid and protectionist expatriate policies will continue to limit productivity, slow innovation, and weaken competitiveness.

Rethinking the country's expatriate framework is therefore not about displacing local workers, but about strategically complementing them. A more flexible, transparent, and skills-driven policy, one that prioritises knowledge transfer, capacity building, and accountability, can help close urgent gaps while strengthening Nigeria's domestic talent base.

In a global economy where capital follows competence, sustainable growth will depend less on where talent comes from and more on how effectively it is deployed.



NUMBERS OF CHINESE UNIVERSITIES RISE IN 2026 GLOBAL RANKINGS

...as U.S. institutions slip, Harvard fell to No.3, but still dominates.

CHARLES OGWO

Chinese universities have recorded a significant rise in the 2026 global university rankings, strengthening the country's position as a major force in higher education.

Several institutions moved up the table, reflecting sustained investment in research, international collaboration, and academic capacity.

According to the New York Times report, "For 2026, and for the 10th year in a row, Times Higher Education (THE) ranked Oxford University as the number one university in the world.

"The rest of the organisation's top five ranked universities are M.I.T., Princeton, the University of Cambridge, and then Harvard, tied with Stanford, which were also the top ranked institutions last year."

The U.S. institutions held seven of the top 10 spots in the 2026 ranking. But farther down the list, American universities are slipping. Not less than 62 U.S. universities were ranked lower than in 2025, while only 19 rose.

However, in China, the reverse seemed to be the case, ten years ago, two prominent Beijing schools, Peking University and Tsinghua University were ranked 42 and 47 in Times Higher Education's list, and now they are just below the top 10: Tsinghua was ranked 12, and Peking 13.

Six schools in Hong Kong are now in the top 200; South Korea placed four in the top 100.

While some foreign schools have risen, some well-known American schools have slipped. Duke University, for instance, was ranked 20 in 2021, and now is ranked 28. Over that same time span, Emory University dropped to 102 from 85. Ten years ago, Notre Dame ranked 108; now it is ranked 194.

According to Alex Usher, president of Higher Education Strategy Associates, a Toronto education consulting company, the pressures that could reduce Harvard's research output, such as federal grant reductions and cuts to the institution's Ph.D. programmes are unlikely to show up immediately in rankings.

"If you're looking at how many articles end up in 'Nature' or 'Science' from that institution, that is based on research that

started four or five years ago. There is a pretty serious time lag. I wouldn't expect that to have a big impact in the next few years."

While China is thriving in disciplines such as chemistry and environmental sciences, the United States and Europe remain dominant in others, such as general biology and medical sciences. Besides, a research has suggested that Chinese researchers have been boosting their citation rankings by citing one another more often than western researchers tend to cite other westerners.

University rankings are an old phenomenon, dating back to the early 20th Century, according to Alan Ruby, senior fellow and director of global engagement at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Students often use rankings to help them decide where to apply, and academics use them as guides to where to work and conduct research, he said. Some governments use them in doling out research money, and some employers see them as a tool for quickly sorting large numbers of entry-level job candidates.

"If you're trying to attract the best talent in the world, be it students or researchers or faculty, you want to have that signaling power of, 'We're a highly ranked institution,'" Ruby said.

Paul Musgrave, a professor of government at Georgetown University's campus in Doha, Qatar emphasised that beyond marketing, rankings matter because the quality of universities matter, "It can be difficult to draw a direct line between good universities and national power, he said, but "on the other hand, we all know that when the Germans wrecked their universities in the 1930s it probably hurt them in a lot of ways," Musgrave noted.

Moreover, a study has shown that China has been investing in research and trying to draw in scientists as the United States pulls back.

China has been pouring billions of dollars into its universities and aggressively working to make them attractive to foreign researchers. In the fall, China began offering a visa specifically for graduates of top universities in science and technology to travel to the country to study or do business.

FROM SHRINE TO STUDIO: SACRED MOTIFS IN MODERN AFRICAN PRACTICE

Walk into enough artists' studios across the continent or its diasporas, and a pattern begins to emerge. Not in style or medium, but in atmosphere. A sense of order that isn't academic. A relationship to materials that feels careful, even restrained. An object placed just out of the way—not for display, but not discarded either. These are not shrines. Yet they are not neutral spaces.

The studio is quiet in the early hours. Light settles on red earth worked into the floor, copper wire coiled beside folded cloth. In a corner, a small carved figure leans against the wall—not an altar, not decoration, but something carried forward into the present. It doesn't announce its meaning, yet it subtly shapes the room. Many contemporary African studios hold objects like this: active without spectacle, present without explanation.

In this digest, we reflect on how African artists continue to draw from spiritual systems, sacred symbols, and ancestral practices—not as relics of the past, but as living frameworks that shape artistic process, material choices, and exhibition strategies today.

TOP PICKS FROM OUR COLLECTION



Title: Mental Inbox
Artist: Joseph Eze
Medium: Mixed Media on canvas
Dimensions: 39.4 x 31.5 in | 100 x 80 cm
Available on Request



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Title: Play & Caution
Artist: O'dare Adenuga
Medium: Acrylic on canvas
Dimensions: 48 x 36.2 in | 122 x 92 cm
Available on Request



Title: Resolute II (Layers of Reality Series)
 Artist: Raji Mohammed
 Medium: Acrylic on canvas
 Dimensions: 36.2 x 36.2 in | 92 x 92 cm
 Available on Request

Continuity Beyond Disruption

African spiritual systems were never cleanly separated from daily life, even through colonial and postcolonial upheaval. Yoruba, Akan, Igbo, Dogon, and other cosmologies adapted rather than vanished—folding themselves into language, ethics, and material culture. For many artists, these systems were not rediscovered through archives or museums but absorbed through family practices and communal rhythms. The persistence we see in contemporary work is less about revival and more about inheritance.

Translation Inside Contemporary Practice

When sacred motifs appear in contemporary African art, they are rarely preserved intact. Artists translate them into industrial materials, architectural scale, or conceptual gestures. A divination mark becomes an abstract score; a shrine logic informs an installation's spatial flow.

These translations involve tension. Some meanings are deliberately withheld; others are reconfigured to survive within galleries and biennials. What matters is not fidelity but intention: the decision to let these systems continue thinking within new contexts.

The Studio as a Site of Ritual

Artistic process itself often mirrors ritual structures without naming them as such. Repetition, preparation, and care recur across practices—whether in clay, fibre, metal, or pigment. Artists speak of timing, restraint, and attention as essential to making. The studio becomes a disciplined space where action is measured, and meaning accumulates slowly. This is not mysticism for effect, but an ethics of work shaped by inherited ways of relating to materials and time.

The Risk of Misreading

Global art audiences are not always equipped to read sacred references with nuance. Symbols are frequently flattened into aesthetics or treated as universal metaphors. Without context, meaning can be extracted rather than engaged. Curatorial framing becomes crucial here. Wall texts, catalogues, and public programs increasingly carry the responsibility of holding space for complexity—without exoticism and without forcing translation where it does not belong.

Sacred motifs persist in contemporary African art not as nostalgia, but as living knowledge—capable of adaptation, resistance, and quiet insistence. They remind us that the distance between shrine and studio is smaller than it appears, and that some systems never stopped speaking. The question is whether we are prepared to listen with care.



Keturah Ovio
 Keturah Ovio is an Executive at Patrons Modern & Contemporary African Art. She is also an engineer and Founder of Dukka, a Fintech startup providing bookkeeping and payments solutions for small businesses. Keturah is passionate about African Art and has been collecting art since her early 20s. Now, she advises, curates, and manages collections for individuals and corporate organisations looking to start or diversify their wealth management through art collecting. She strongly believes that a fine marriage exists between Art and Technology

'ÀJOSE: THE STORIES THAT BIND US' USES FILM, CULTURAL DIALOGUE TO EXAMINE SILENCE AROUND WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Filmmakers, healthcare professionals, and cultural practitioners will converge at Alliance française on 19 January for ÀJOSE: The Stories That Bind Us, a one-day film screening and conversation exploring the narratives that connect us.

ÀJOSE is a cultural gathering that uses film, visual storytelling, and moderated dialogue to explore how silence, stigma, and inherited beliefs continue to shape women's reproductive health experiences in Nigeria.

Rather than positioning itself as a campaign or advocacy forum, it approaches the subject through narrative, exploring how everyday decisions around care, consent, pregnancy, and reproductive rights are often influenced by fear, misinformation, and social expectation.

At the centre of the programme is the premiere screening of *Silence Is Loud*, a short film directed by Abba Makama. Known for his use of satire and surrealism, Makama takes a markedly restrained approach in *Silence Is*

Loud, focusing on performance, emotional realism, and the weight of what remains unsaid.

The film examines how unspoken truths surrounding women's bodies and healthcare choices reverberate through families and intimate relationships, revealing the quiet consequences of cultural silence.

It marks the director's first time working from a script he did not write, developed in close collaboration with the writer to ensure a shared vision.

Alongside this central work, the programme will unveil two other new productions, screened in the presence of their respective teams:

Care or Control?, a new documentary by Chika Okoli, which questions the fine line between care and coercion in women's health journeys.

Majek and the Ghost, a new animated series produced by Magic Carpet studio, uses animation to address complex themes with a unique visual approach.

Each screening will be followed by discussions led by experts, offering the audience a rare opportunity to engage directly with filmmakers,

healthcare professionals and cultural commentators.

Beyond film, ÀJOSE will host an outdoor visual installation titled "Truths and Myths", an immersive walk-through experience that places widely held cultural beliefs about women's reproductive health alongside medically grounded facts.

The installation invites audiences to confront the distance between what is commonly believed and what is medically accurate.

ÀJOSE, derived from a Yoruba word meaning to come together, was conceived as a space for collective reflection rather than confrontation.

"Many of the ideas shaping women's health decisions today were inherited without examination," the organisers note. "ÀJOSE is about creating room to listen carefully, ask better questions, and acknowledge realities that are often discussed only in whispers."

ÀJOSE: The Stories That Bind Us is open to invited guests and members of the public by registration.

5 TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BRANDING CONSISTENT ACROSS PLATFORMS

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Brand consistency is the foundation of recognition and trust. Whether you are posting on social media, sending emails, or meeting customers face to face, your message and visuals should stay unified. In other words, brand consistency = brand recognition.

The question is – how do you maintain a steady brand image when there are such different platforms on which to be seen? Shouldn't you tailor your branding to each platform individually?

Well, yes and no.

When planning a brand strategy, we like to approach varying platforms the way we would making friends – you can and should accommodate their differences, but you must draw the line when it comes to changing yourself. This means that your brand design, language, and overall message shouldn't waver, regardless of what platform you're using to communicate with your audience.

Here are five strategies to help you create that method and keep your branding consistent.

1. Plan ahead

The easiest way to stay consistent is to make a plan before you start. It may sound tedious (and in some cases, it is) but planning is key.

a. Know your mission statement. What are the values that drive your company? Which goals are you working towards? Answering these questions will then help you:

b. Determine a brand voice. Pretend your brand is a person – what would he/she sound like when speaking? Your brand voice is the persona that communicates with the rest of the world, through marketing materials, social posts, etc.

When pinning down your brand voice, there are two things to take into consideration:

-What your message for the world is (refer to mission statement). For example, you won't see a heart

foundation using humour as part of their marketing strategy.

-The audience intended to hear your message. Corporate jargon shouldn't find its way into a restaurant trying to appeal to families. If you already have a brand voice, great! Make sure it's easily recognisable, and, of course, consistent across platforms.

c. Create a content plan. You should make a content calendar that includes information like what you'll be posting, which kind of post it is, when it needs to be ready by and where you're posting it when the time comes.

Knowing what you'll be posting in advance reduces the risk of error; planning your content is a surefire way to keep your branding materials cohesive and on-message.

2. Create a brand book

No one knows your brand better than you do. But just because you're an expert doesn't mean your team is – much less third parties. So, how can you ensure that no matter who is working on your branding, it will always come across the same?

There's an easy fix. A simple way to maintain brand consistency across the board is by making a brand book – i.e. an online document that provides all the necessary rules about the style your brand uses.

Basically, your brand book is a style guide that should contain information about the following:

- Typography and accepted fonts
- Colour palette
- Ideal logo sizes (and the proper specs when resizing logo)
- Appropriate spacing
- Correct background usage
- Examples of how not to brand

Every member of your company should have access to the brand book, so there's never a question about how to represent your brand.

3. Establish platform guidelines

Most branding platforms have unique requirements and best practices that have to be taken into consideration. E-mail marketing won't look the same as a TV commercial; a landing page will never come across like a newsletter.

And, social media channels alone can widely differ in audience, acceptable media, and marketing strategy:

- Facebook: The most “social” of the networks; good for posting a combo of visual and long-form textual content, appealing to most age demographics, and bringing in leads through advertising
- Instagram: Focuses on visual content (photos, short videos) and using hashtags. Good for inspiring your audience and emphasising design aspects of your brand
- You Tube: Biggest video sharing platform; good for creating engaging and educational videos
- LinkedIn: The “professional” network; all about making corporate connections. Good for establishing thought leadership
- X: Fast-paced; only accepts tweets of 280 characters or less, so messages need to be captivating and to the point. Good for engagement and driving people back to your website
- Tik Tok: Heavy on visual contents and breezy. Good for telling your stories with visuals and short captions. However, despite these differences, your brand should look and sound similar across each platform.

4. Create versatile materials

From the get-go, you should think about how to create branding materials that are usable across different types of media.

While you don't have to create every single post to fit every channel, the ability to use similar campaigns helps you expedite your marketing efforts, and ensures that visuals and message stay on point.

5. Bridge the online-offline gap

These days, most branding efforts are (understandably) concentrated on the web. That said – your business's offline presence shouldn't be neglected. Humans crave contact, and personal

branding is no exception; your audience will want assurance that there's an authentic face behind the company name.

However, this face needs to be coherent with the brand message you've worked so hard to cultivate, no matter where it appears.

Think of your online branding as an initial way to get customers to engage with your brand in person – a brand that they feel like they already know.

Last line

Branding is all about creating and maintaining a connection with your audience, cultivating a specific association with your business in their minds. To make this association stick, your brand message needs to be consistent, no matter who is seeing it and where.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa is a Reputation and Perception Management expert. He is a prolific writer and researcher who, at different times, served as Head of Corporate Communications of top brands quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. A versatile communications specialist, he practiced extensively as a print journalist and was variously engaged in the broadcast media, working on radio and television. Feyisitan continues to write on corporate communications, brand reputation and perception management, and brand intelligence, among others. He organises the 'Brand Intelligence and the Marketplace' masterclass. Feyisitan advocates a pollution free and sustainable environment

THE RISE OF DIGITAL ATHLETES: INSIDE PARTNERSHIP DEFINING THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA'S ESPORTS INDUSTRY

CHINONYE ISIDIENU



Nigeria's esports industry is currently undergoing a meteoric rise, fueled by a massive, mobile-first demographic of over 46 million players.

With a projected revenue potential exceeding \$300 million, the sector is rapidly evolving from a casual pastime into a sophisticated ecosystem of professional tournaments, live streaming, and high-value brand partnerships.

At the center of this transformation are Cade eSports and Game Evolution, two organizations collaborating to build the structural framework necessary to position Nigeria as Africa's definitive digital entertainment hub.

The current landscape is a vibrant blend of passionate grassroots communities and burgeoning professional leagues. Central to this growth is the National E-Sports Tournament, which features a high-octane lineup of titles including EA Sports FC (EAFC), Street Fighter 6, Tekken 8, and Mortal Kombat 1.

This multi-platform approach ensures inclusivity, catering to both the high-end console market and the expansive mobile gaming community.

The League Structure and the Road to Division 1 The path to pro-status is becoming increasingly structured. Following the successful conclusion of Division 3, the spotlight now shifts to the National E-Soccer Pro League Division 2, set to commence on January 17, 2026.

This seven-week gauntlet will see 20 elite players battle for promotion, with the top eight advancing to the prestigious Division 1 Pro League starting in April. The stakes are higher than ever, with a 5 million Naira aggregate prize pool distributed between the divisions to incentivize talent and professionalize the circuit.

Beyond domestic borders, Cade eSports and Game Evolution are aggressively pursuing international exposure for Nigerian talent.



By facilitating participation in continental events like the E-AFCOM in Morocco and global stages such as the Esports World Cup in Saudi Arabia, they are ensuring Nigerian gamers are recognized on the world map.

To support this vision physically, Paulson Chima, the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Cade eSports, revealed plans for a dedicated Esports Hub in Yaba, Lagos.

Scheduled for completion by next year, this facility will serve as a sanctuary for training, competition, and game development. In the interim, tournaments are being hosted across various event centers and gaming hubs, supported by the Lagos State Government and the Nigerian Esports Federation.

During a recent press conference, Chima Chima Paulson, CEO and Founder of Cade eSports, and Adenipebi Sholakunmi, CEO and Founder of Game Evolution, both outlined their shared vision for positioning Cade eSports as the largest gaming and eSports provider in Africa.

The event brought together industry stakeholders, media representatives, and gaming enthusiasts to witness a renewed commitment to transforming Africa into a globally competitive force in gaming and eSports.

Since the inception of their partnership in 2023, Cade eSports and Game Evolution have collaborated on a mission to expand access to gaming and competitive eSports across the continent.

Together, they have successfully hosted over 50 eSports tournaments, including CAGE (Cade African Gaming Expo), widely recognized as the largest eSports tournament in Africa since 2024.

Paulson emphasized the importance of accessibility in the growth of the industry. According to him, the partnership is focused on exposing a broader audience to gaming and eSports by providing access to gaming consoles, PCs, and mobile devices, thereby breaking entry barriers for young and aspiring gamers.

Adenipebi Sholakunmi reiterated Game Evolution's commitment to changing public perception around gaming and eSports.

He noted that the partnership aims to make eSports more acceptable within communities by showcasing its educational, economic, and social value, as well as its potential to create new career pathways for African youth.

The partnership between Cade eSports and Game Evolution represents a deliberate effort to build a sustainable eSports ecosystem in Africa; one that promotes talent development, community engagement, and industry growth at both grassroots and elite levels.

As both organizations continue to expand their footprint, they remain committed to redefining Africa's role in the global gaming and eSports landscape.

WORDS FROM A WOUNDED HEART (PART 2)

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR



...Continued from previous week

...Abigail's Perspective

People used to say Austin was a good guy. A kind neighbor. A responsible young man. My parents trusted him and that trust opened the door to my heart.

I was raised in a strict home. No male friends. Yet Austin was allowed. He visited freely, spoke

respectfully and helped everyone. To the world, he was admirable. To me, he was everything.

We dated in secret for two years. Quiet love. Careful love. Or so I thought.

When I gained admission to study Economics in Delta State, I was happy and afraid at the same time. Austin took me out to celebrate. That afternoon changed my

life forever. I was scared. I said no. But I believed his words, his promises, his reassurance. I believed love meant safety.

When I discovered I was pregnant, my whole world shook. I went to Austin first because I trusted him. Because I believed he would stand by me. Instead, he denied me.

He told me to find the father of my child. Those words shattered me.

I went home and told my parents. They were angry, very angry. My father's disappointment cut deep. My mother cried for days. But even in their anger, they did not abandon me. They stood by me. They held me up when I was breaking.

When we confronted Austin and he denied me again, I begged him to tell the truth. I begged with tears. He looked at me like I meant nothing.

Something broke inside me that day. The words I spoke were not planned. They came from deep pain, betrayal and humiliation. I spoke because I was wounded not because I wanted revenge.

After that incident, my life paused. I had to take a one-year gap from school to have my child. It was not easy. The shame was loud but my mother was louder with her love. She stood by me completely. She helped me care for my son so I could return to school later and complete my education.

After my son was born, Austin's brother and his wife tried to show kindness. They came with gifts, trying to ease the situation. My father always declined politely. He was not rude but he was firm. That chapter was closed.

Not long after, my parents moved out of the rented apartment into their own house. That was the end of that neighborhood. I never saw Austin's brother or his wife again.

Life went on. I focused on my child and my studies. I graduated. I healed slowly. I gave up completely on men. My first and only experience with love had nearly destroyed me. I promised myself I would never walk that path again.

Then I attended an Economic and Business Summit. That was where I met my husband. At first, I wasn't interested. Not even a little. I had built walls too high. I had decided love was not for me. But he was persistent—gentle, respectful, patient. He did not

rush me. He did not pressure me. He earned my trust slowly. And when I finally chose him, I never regretted it.

He gave me a new understanding of love. A new lease on life. He loved my son openly and fully, as his own. With him, I smiled again. I felt safe again. I lived again. I had more children. I blossomed. I moved on, not out of spite but because I had to live.

Recently, I received a Facebook friend request. From Austin. I laughed.

That had to be the joke of the century. After all these years. After silence. After denial. After pain.

I did not accept the request.

Some doors, once closed should remain closed. I forgave him long ago but forgiveness does not erase consequences.

I have also realised that time has a way of telling the truth without saying a word.

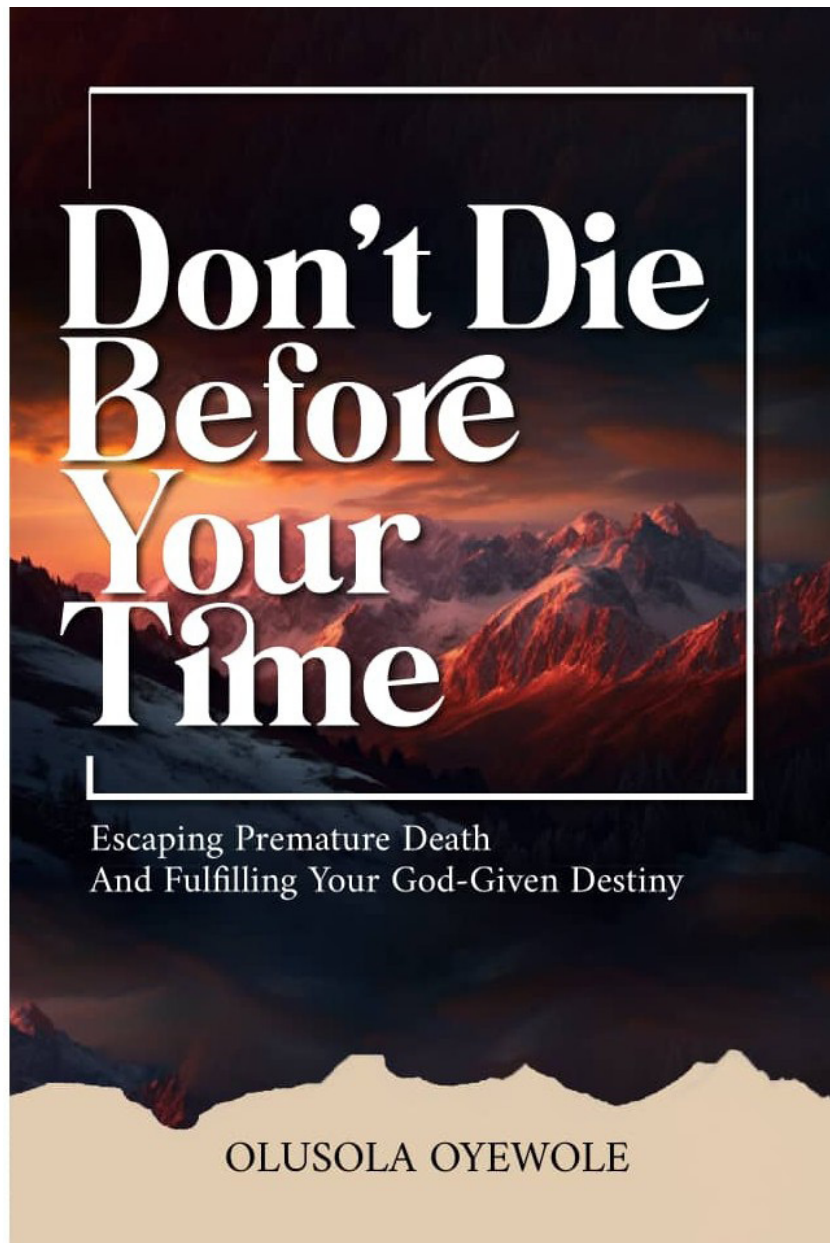


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The Cost of Living Carelessly-A Review of Olusola Oyewole's Don't Die Before Your Time

Title: Don't Die Before Your Time
Author: Olusola Oyewole
Year of Publication: 2025
Number of Pages: 511
Category: Self Help

DON'T DIE BEFORE YOUR TIME

TITILADE OYEMADE

From the title alone, *Don't Die Before Your Time*, it is clear that Olusola Oyewole is not here to comfort the reader; he is here to confront them. The book opens with urgency, like a clear warning. The author wastes no time asking hard, uncomfortable questions and reminds readers not to take life lightly.

Oyewole drives his message firmly across the book. While the repetition may feel heavy at times, it is clearly deliberate. His goal is not polished writing, but impact. He wants readers to sharpen their spiritual discernment, discover purpose, and avoid what he describes as a tragic, untimely death.

That intensity can feel unsettling. At certain points, the author's tone comes across as judgmental, prompting readers to push back mentally. Questions naturally arise: does dying early mean someone failed in life? Does it automatically suggest a life lived wrongly? These questions linger, and while the book raises them powerfully, it does not always resolve them clearly, making the reading experience both challenging and, at times, frustrating.

The book is deeply spiritual and unapologetic about it. It challenges beliefs and life patterns many people have accepted as normal, forcing readers to examine their choices, habits, and spiritual lives. Some of the revelations are intense enough to provoke fear, and not everyone will be comfortable with how directly the author links spiritual negligence to life outcomes.

There are moments when the author's insight into human behaviour and spiritual struggles is very clear and impressive. Although he explains that his writing is based on instruction and insight, it can still feel unsettling, even intense. This discomfort, however, appears intentional. The book is designed to shake the reader awake.

One of its strengths is that it does not leave the reader hopeless. Oyewole offers practical responses, encouraging prayer, awareness, responsibility, and intentional living. This is not a book to be read passively; it invites reflection and, at times, silent disagreement.

Perhaps its most powerful message is its insistence on human value. The author reminds readers that their lives matter, not out of pride, but because others depend on them. In doing so, he speaks directly against carelessness, despair, and even suicidal thoughts. His message is blunt: this is not the time to give up on life.

By the end of the book, one truth is clear: your life is in your hands, and what you do with it is your responsibility. *Don't Die Before Your Time* is not an easy or gentle read. It is confrontational, spiritual, and at times controversial. But for readers willing to engage deeply, it may reawaken a sense of purpose, urgency, and responsibility for life itself.

This is not a book everyone will agree with, but it is one that will stay with you long after you close it.



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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

HIS & HER (2025) SERIES

This series was absolutely amazing, you know those kinds of movies that leave you totally speechless and breathless, then this was absolutely one of them, honestly, I never expected this and didn't see this coming at all, if you think you are good at predicting who the main bad guy really was, you will have to think again, this movie will blow your mind. In this movie I got to understand that in life there are always two sides of the story and you only know one side, the side you get to hear. Anna was a fantastic journalist, she had some terrible issues in her home and decided to take a break, on her return she finds out that her friend has taken over her job. Suddenly she becomes the main prime suspect of the murder of her high school friends, but Anna claims to be innocent. Anna will have to get to the bottom of the issues and vindicate herself from the issues in the city. You will need to watch the entire series to discover who was behind all the killings, why the person committed the murders and the motives behind the killings. The revelation at the end of the movie left me totally perplexed, wait till the very end. The 6 Episode series movie was created by William Oldroyd, they featured A-list actors like Isabelle Kusman, Tessa Thompson, Jon Bernthal, Pablo Schreiber, Marian Ireland, Sunia Mani, Rebecca Rittenhouse, Crystal Fox and many more.



RUN AWAY (2026) SERIES

It seems like this is my lucky week from one series to another, which is weird and strange, for those who follow me, you know how clearly how I struggle with series, but as I had loads of time this holiday, I decided to watch as many series as possible as Netflix had more exciting series than movies. To the movie Simon was a very hardworking family-oriented man, he loved his wife so much and his kids, for some weird and in despicable reason his daughter begins to date a drug junkie, who disrupts her life totally and makes her drop out of school, one faithful evening she runs home to tell her mom what he had done to her and her mom tell her to forgive, and move on till they find a better solution and file with the cops. Simon went to the park daily, for months to look for his daughter but couldn't find her, when an incident occurred in the park, Simon was framed and blamed for beating up her boyfriend and this led to them suddenly suspecting him as the main killer in the movie, you will need to go check out the movie to totally understand who the real killer was, their motive and who they were trying to punish. The 1 season 8 episodes thriller series was created by Harlan Coben, they featured fantastic actors like James Nesbitt, Ruh Jones, Alfred Enoch, Tracy Ann Oberman, Ingrid Oliver, Amy Gledhill, Annee Badland, Mark Bazeley, Jon Pointing, Ellie Henry, Minnie Driver and many more.



MATERIALISTS (2025)

For those of you who enjoy romantic movies, then this will be worth your while. For some weird reason I wanted the movie to have another twist, despite knowing how it will end. In this movie Lucy was an amazing pretty match maker and she had reduced everything down to science, she felt she had it all figured out and she could just study the boxes of the 2 individuals and match make them, turning them into a match made in heaven, it worked until one day, everything went down for her through a client of Her's. For Lucy she had her well-articulated list, from height, to status, to salary figures and features, she found him until she became confused after she met the man of her dreams and reconnected with her ex-sincere boyfriend, who was still broke, but then nice and sweet. Well you will need to go check out the movie to find out who she ended up with, nice story and lessons I must say, still smiling till now. The 116 romantic comedy film, drama, comedies, independent, romance movie was directed by Celine Song, they featured actors like Dakota Johnson, Chris Evans, Pedro Pascal, Zoe Winters, Marin Ireland, Louisa Jacobson e. t. c.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Concentration has no holiday
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Treat your haters with sincere kindness. Even though they may not be able to swallow it
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Every branch that bears fruit, He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. NOT ALL PURGING IS NEGATIVE
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Battles are won even now. Open your eyes
.....WhispersbyTENTEN