

MultiChoice - Identifying with subscribers via CSR

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Like some other corporate organisations in the Nigerian market, the management of MultiChoice Nigeria has consistently leveraged on its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to connect with the market and touch lives.

Beyond the offering of services and production of products, brand owners at local and international markets are in recent times adjusting to the need for corporate organisations to give back to the societies in their area of operations. In Nigeria, some companies, especially in the oil and gas, telecommunications, manufacturing and financial sectors are daily making impacts through this global trend, thereby touching the lives of consumers in another way.

In the Pay TV sub-sector of the broadcasting industry, MultiChoice Nigeria is also using the platform to change the perception that it is only in the market to provide home entertainment through its variety of channels delivered via the DStv platform. Of course, that is the face of the organisation the public is most familiar with and that is hardly a surprise given the fact that the company is obviously the market leader in the country's pay TV industry.

With this new approach, its promoters are presenting its other face, which some see as that of a sensitive and responsive corporate citizen. Head of Corporate Communication, Segun Fayose told journalists during a recent media parley that this face was acquired by the company from birth. He said: "Being a Nigerian company, perhaps, it has no option other than to mesh into the society's fabric through its services and, of course, through exemplary organisational conduct."

'We're committed to giving back to the people'

MultiChoice Nigeria chairman, Chief Adewunmi Ogunsanya says the company is committed to giving back to the country and its people. "We demonstrate our commitment to Nigeria by regularly contributing our time and resources to uplifting the communities we operate in. Education and access to information are essential to the development and growth of a nation," he said.

Declarations of commitment and sensitivity like this, particularly from corporate entities, are a dime a dozen in Nigeria. But MultiChoice's CRS has been activated, yielded impressive outcomes and has attracted attestations from the public as well as industry regulators. In October 2010, the company was honoured with an award for Investment in Developing Local Capacity by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

In arriving at the choice of MultiChoice for the honour, the NBC said: "The committee found MultiChoice Nigeria worthy of the award after considering the level of investment it has made into developing local capacity in broadcasting in Nigeria and beyond." NBC's assessment was an appreciation of MultiChoice's vast contributions to industry training and development.

For one, the company has been at the forefront of driving skills transfer to personnel in the domestic film and production industries.

Film Talent Incubator Programme

Its Film Talent Incubator Programme, launched in 2007, was conceived to develop the skills of previously disadvantaged entry level persons in the film industry. Beneficiaries of this programme were exposed to advanced training and mentorship required to help them progress in the industry. The company's investment in the domestic film industry, Nollywood, is also visible in the training schemes it organised to imbue participants with multi-camera, studio-based skills for the projects produced by M-Net in Nigeria. New Directions, an M-Net initiative, put the accent on the providing young filmmakers with HD and lighting support skills.

Similar efforts in capacity development and expansion has resulted in cameramen, technicians and directors benefitting from training programmes that have ensured that they are capable of producing high quality live sports programmes. A significant outcome of this is that studio production personnel and studio production staff on live productions and studio broadcasts are wholly Nigerian.

Secondary School Open Championship

Last year's edition of Secondary School Open Championship was broadcast live by SuperSport. Though the broadcast cost a princely N15million, it was considered as a contribution to youth development. Footages of the championship were also given free of charge to domestic football club sides to send to scouts.

MultiChoice is giving adequate attention to football, the country's favourite sport, through SuperSport. A new programme, Naija Made, focuses on the lifestyles of Nigerian footballers and creates stars out of stars in the domestic league. This is in addition to the regular broadcast of local league matches. SuperSport recently signed an agreement with Rugby Association of Nigeria in an effort to develop the game and bring it more to the attention of the public. It has also acquired the rights to the Nigerian Basketball League.

Currently, SuperSport is the biggest investor in Nigerian sports. This position was earned through the acquisition of broadcast rights, sponsorship, training and development.

N31billion Investment in Local Content

In general terms, the company's investments, founded on its belief in the domestic broadcast industry, is huge. Towards delivering high quality content to subscribers, MultiChoice is said to have invested over N31billion in local content via premium channels providers like M-Net and SuperSport.

According to a statement, SuperSport has invested money in excess of N9billion in training, production of sport programmes and coverage. A sum of N135million was committed to the sponsorship of basketball. The statement stated further that since 1999, over N5 billion has been spent in capital investment into the business.

Within the same period, MultiChoice Nigeria has paid over N15billion in a variety of taxes; spent N70 million on staff, value chain development and training and about N150million on training in television production skills. In the area of promoting entrepreneurship, the company, has through its Super Dealers Programme, started six years ago, raised a platoon of local entrepreneurs.

Through the programme, aspiring entrepreneurs are formally trained in handling the country's products and services. The Super Dealers are then assisted to develop a business plan, attract banking facilities and other necessary assistance to grow their business. This, by far, is the most far-reaching empowerment initiative the country's broadcasting industry. The other spin-off of the initiative is that it has succeeded in getting its services and products to previously unreached parts of the country.

Sickle Cell Foundation

The Pay Tv organisation is also a strong supporter of the Sickle Cell Foundation - Nigeria and engages in philanthropy on need basis. The company refurbished the Laboratory of Igbobi College, Lagos, as part of its Adopt-A-School initiative. A similar investment is the MultiChoice Resource Centre (MRC) project.

Through this, resource centres are set up in schools to train teachers. The company also provides content and instructional materials, as well as TVs and TV recorders to ensure that the children learn. Channels like Discovery Channel and History Channel are provided within a framework to enable the training of teachers as well as to get the children educated. Since 2004 when it was launched, the project has delivered 301 resource centres is over in 21 states of the federation. The company also monitors the use to which the centres are being put. In all, the project is said to have gulped about N236million.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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