

**NATIONAL REPUTATION AS A CORE ASSET:
A CASE FOR REBRANDING NIGERIA'S
INTERNATIONAL IMAGE**

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INTRODUCTION

MEET NIGERIA

- A country of vast natural resources
 - Abundant human capital
 - Talented youth especially in Sports
 - Outside the country, her citizens are reputed to be the best in their respective fields
 - Very clement climate
 - Vast uncultivated land mass (at least 40% virgin land)
 - Self-acclaimed “Giant of Africa”
 - World acclaimed “Sleeping Giant”
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INTRODUCTION

MEET NIGERIA (cont.)

- ❑ Self acclaimed “Heartbeat of Africa”
 - ❑ Regionally feared “Big (Brother) Bully”
 - ❑ Altogether, a country with very high potential for success in every endeavour.
- ❑ But.....
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CURRENT INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

- ❑ Scam Headquarters of the world
 - ❑ 85 % of scam letters are thought to originate from Nigeria
 - ❑ Nigeria is also believed to be a transit country for hard drugs and narcotics
 - ❑ Nigeria is reputed to be the 20th poorest nation in the world
 - ❑ Currently rated 3rd most corrupt country in the world
 - ❑ Her citizens are however reputed to be richer than the country
 - ❑ Nigeria's creditors have been very hesitant to forgive her debts because the international community knows the figures of public funds stashed away by her leaders
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CURRENT NEGATIVE “BRANDS”

- ❑ “Flying Elephant”- Brand given to the national carrier Nigeria Airways
 - ❑ “Green Eagles” – Acronym for the national team
 - ❑ “419” – section of the penal code that deals with fraud
 - ❑ “Dumping Ground for counterfeit drugs”
 - ❑ “Significant underachiever”
 - ❑ “Political experiment”
 - ❑ “Security risk”
 - ❑ “Unstable environment”
 - ❑ A country where “anything goes”. Anything can be procured ; for a fee.
 - ❑ Generally negative international press
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CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO REBRAND THE COUNTRY

- ❑ Advertisement and publicity in the international media
 - ❑ Establishment of strong institutions to combat advance fee fraud – Economic & Financial Crimes Commission + Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
 - ❑ A strong Drug control agency - NAFDAC
 - ❑ Avowed zero – tolerance for corruption
 - ❑ Institution of a National Committee on “Nigeria – Heart-of-Africa” project
 - ❑ Strong economic reforms
 - ❑ Serious commitment to international peace-keeping
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THE REAL CHALLENGES OF HAVING A NEGATIVE NATIONAL IMAGE

- ❑ Everywhere a Nigerian presents his green passport he is viewed with all skepticism and caution
 - ❑ All efforts at FDI not yielding desired results
 - ❑ Difficult to establish credibility
 - ❑ International trade is all about credibility
 - ❑ Trade in services is actually trade in intangibles i.e. “selling the promise”
 - ❑ You cannot “sell-the promise” if you are not credible
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SERVICES TO THE RESCUE?

- ❑ The first African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature is a Nigerian
 - ❑ The Most thriving Film Industry in Africa is Nigeria's "**Nollywood**"
 - ❑ The first African to Captain a Premiership side is a Nigerian
 - ❑ At one time it was believed that America's greatest surgeon was a Nigerian
 - ❑ One of America's "All-time Greatest" in Basketball is a Nigerian
 - ❑ You cannot "sell-the promise" if you are not credible
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SERVICES TO THE RESCUE? (Cont.)

- ❑ Nigeria, then “unknown”, won the maiden World Under-17 World cup in China in 1985
 - ❑ Nigeria’s doggedness saw her come from 4-0 down to win the match against Russia in Saudi Arabia in 1989
 - ❑ Nigeria repeated the feat against Brazil in the Olympic Games Football event in Atlanta, and went ahead to win the event’s Gold Medal in 1996
 - ❑ Nigerian Architects are making waves in the West Africa sub-region. The Headquarters Building of ADB in Abidjan was built by a Nigerian
 - ❑ Countries like Gambia and Botswana have entrusted sensitive national offices (Chief Justice, Economic Counselor) to Nigerians
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SERVICES TO THE RESCUE? (Cont.)

- ❑ Togo is set to qualify for the World Cup in Germany for the first time in her history. The Chief Coach of the Togolese National Team is a Nigerian
 - ❑ The World-acclaimed “Mr. Internet” is a Nigerian
 - ❑ Nigeria is the only country in Africa that contributes skilled manpower to other developing countries through the Technical Aids Corps Scheme
 - ❑ Until the recent scandal in the Congo, Nigerian military and police forces have always won the best-behaved tag in all Peace-keeping assignments to which they were deployed
 - ❑ Consistently over the past six years, Nigeria has hosted peace talks and other regional dialogues with resounding success
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Therefore...

A CASE FOR REBRANDING

- ❑ International Trade, in commodities or in services depends a lot on the country's international image.
 - ❑ The international market place is characterised by fierce competition and sophistication
 - ❑ Trade in services depends on the ability of the buyer to depend on your reliability and delivery efficiency
 - ❑ To participate meaningfully in international trade in services (and goods) all negative reputation must be dislodged
 - ❑ Where it is impossible to create a unique national brand, we must rebuild the country's international image...
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HOW TO DO THIS?

- ❑ Establish credibility. The fight against corruption must produce realistic “culprits” and visible punishment.
 - ❑ Celebrate World beaters in respective professions.
 - ❑ Encourage the publicising of success stories of Nigerian entrepreneurs making waves locally and internationally
 - ❑ Use successful credible youth as role models. Appoint them as “Ambassadors Plenipotentiary” to carry the Nigerian message to their various countries of practice and affectation
 - ❑ Encourage advocacy. Bring these world beaters home occasionally to pep-talk their home-based colleagues
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HOW TO DO THIS?

- ❑ Be careful when going for international trade events to select only the best and most credible enterprises to present to the world. Their performance will gradually reshape the country's international reputation
 - ❑ Remember that in international trade in services, the greatest asset is credibility. If you have it flaunt it. Use positive media (not paid advertorial) media to counter negative international press
 - ❑ Consciously and proactively address areas of constructive criticism
 - ❑ Rewards heroes and stigmatise villains
 - ❑ Selective promotion of positive personalities, projects/programmes and activities . E.g. TINAPA, FOOTBALL, NOLLYWOOD, MUSIC, FISHING FESTIVALS, BOAT REGATTA etc
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CONCLUSION

- ❑ Nigeria, in her present international image, cannot profitably participate in international trade, be it in goods or services
 - ❑ Paid advertorials in world press cannot effectively counter the hitherto sustained negative international press.
 - ❑ The greatest asset a country can possess is high international reputation. This will open the gateway to profitable international trade.
 - ❑ For a country with a history of deficient infrastructures and unstable political and economic environments, perhaps the most effective tool to re-brand would be a conscious promotion of successful services champions
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THANK YOU

