

Bank & Entrepreneur Africa

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SAM IWUAJOKU
**THE SUPER
ENTREPRENEUR**

CHAIRMAN, EXECUJET

CHAIRMAN, THE LEGEND HOTEL LAGOS
AIRPORT, CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON

ISSN 2505-0273



LUXURY GOODS NIGERIA
/ 10 Vendors to Watch

GUERRILLA MARKETING
/ The Options

ART AND THE ARTIST
/ Adelaide Damoah

LEGEND

LAGOS AIRPORT

CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON



LEGEND



legendhotellagosairport.curiocollection.com



CURIO
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Hilton
— HONORS —

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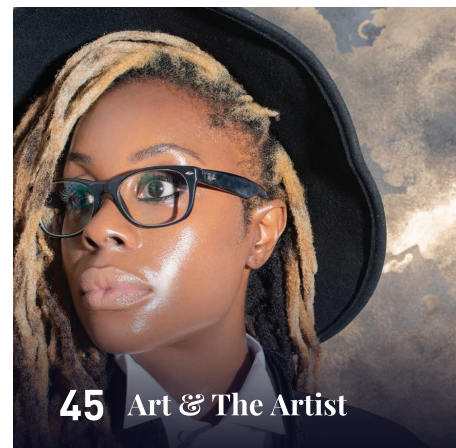
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FROM THE EDITOR

STANDING OUT

Over a span of one year, we have analysed seven well-established entrepreneurs in order to explore the extent to which they foster an entrepreneurial culture, and how smaller, owner-operated businesses can learn from them.

What emerges from that analysis is that the willingness to try things and fail, combined with untold persistence and the intent to do things differently, are the true hallmarks of the stellar entrepreneur.

What can MSMEs – or anyone for that matter – really learn from this group of successful people?

Our interview with super-entrepreneur, Sam Iwuajoku (Chairman of both Execujet, and the Legend Hotel Lagos Airport) throws up four major nuggets:

1. Entrepreneurship at any level is about making a vision accessible to many different markets, while constantly reinventing and honing ideas;

2. Try, try repeatedly: The same brave entrepreneurial spirit that caused Richard Branson to survive and thrive after the failure of at least 14 ventures, is the same never-give-up energy that propels Mr. Iwuajoku – and all the 10 SMEs featured in this issue – to fail repeatedly until they glide into success. What goes hand-in-hand with risk taking is overcoming the fear of failure;

3. There is a lesson in everything: Entrepreneurs understand that most of the good learning comes when things go wrong. They tend to create a non-blame culture and use failure simply as an opportunity to learn what not to do next time. Try to think of ventures and failures as investments – not everything is a winner, but you will learn something from failure.

4. A relentless focus on customer experience and their needs, instead of profits and corner cutting, is much more likely to spell success. All top performing entrepreneurs share an obsession with their customers and surpassing customer expectations. And when customer demands change, they also possess an awesome ability to quickly re-orient their resources and competences in order to seamlessly deliver.

These four factors, when combined with intangibles – things like business influence, strategic vision, and the impact of leadership – tend to separate so-so CEOs/ Founders from the standouts.

Anne N. Agbakoba

anne@numeris-media.com 

THE SUPER ENTREPRENEUR

Sam Imajoku



*O*f Super entrepreneurs are risk-takers and experimenters who try and fail until they establish high grossing, profitable corporations. In our interview with astute businessman and alpha entrepreneur, Sam Iwuajoku, he talks about what he has gleaned from decades of trading, weathering market turmoil, and getting burned—literally.

***ENVISION. START SMALL.
DIVERSIFY (JUST LIKE ANY
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO)***

IN THE BEGINNING

“I went to university in the United States, and graduated in Chemical Engineering. Shortly before returning to Nigeria, I had remotely identified two gaps in the Nigerian market, which I began to position myself to serve.

The first business venture would be to trade in mechanical seals, which was used in refineries, but in acute short supply.

We sold the seals to both the Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries.

I was also curious and down-to-earth, and would jump into Molues (rickety buses) to get around, just to get a good feel of what was happening at the grassroots, in a country I had been away from for a few years. This is when I confirmed that my other business ideas – the importation of wines and cosmetics – would be viable.





We began to import the Manischewitz brand, best known for its kosher wine, and it was a huge success in a market that had very little variety at the time. We were responsible for Manischewitz wines becoming the most sought-after brand in the popular Oke-Arin market, located on Lagos Island.

As business thrived, we quickly spotted other opportunities, and started importing consumables – rice, a little bit of sugar, cosmetics – before taking the big leap into steel for construction.

Steel. This is where we got burnt, almost into oblivion. We do not produce high quality reinforcement steel in Nigeria. What we have is produced from scrap metal, whose tensile strength (140, 180 newtons) is

only sufficient for storey buildings of not more than 1-2 floors, or for gutters.

The type of steel in demand was for constructing high-rise buildings (450, 480 tensile strength), and would usually be sourced from Ukraine, where we began to import from, in vessels.

And so we went headlong into importing steel, financed by Zenith Bank opening a Letter of Credit (LC) for us to the tune of \$16 million.

By the time the consignment arrived Nigeria, a global financial meltdown had caused the value of the import to crash from \$16 million to \$4 million...

“

The most common reason for business diversification is the need to survive.

***SURVIVAL.
GET BACK UP.
RECALIBRATE.
KEEP GOING!***





IN THE BEGINNING (continued)

We had borrowed extensively in order to import steel worth US\$16 million. At the time of berthing at the Nigerian ports, the 2008 global financial crisis had just happened, and the global steel market crashed, leaving us with goods whose value had collapsed to a mere US\$4million. We had lost US\$12 million in a single sweep without even clearing the steel consignment.

The bank we had borrowed from insisted that both the original draw-down amount (US\$16 million) and re-payment plan agreed upon would stand. Even though we were at a severe disadvantage, we held our nerves and asked to make a deal – we would continue to trade in our company's other goods, and channel most of the liquidity towards paying down what now looked like an insurmountable debt.

In addition to trading in other goods, we decided to risk a big-ticket item once again in 2009, and went ahead to raise a further US\$11 million for shipping in more bundles of steel. At that point, the import duty on steel was set at about 50-60%. But, when this shipment arrived, a competitor had, unknown to us, secured a waiver for 0% duty on his own steel import. Clearly, we couldn't compete!

Our goods languished at the ports for over 3 years, while we tried to get approval to clear the steel at salvage value so that the proceeds could at least partially offset the bank loan. Nothing worked. When the goods were eventually cleared, all the steel has rusted due to its proximity to the seaside and salt (water combined with oxidation). I wept. Eventually, the rusted bundles were auctioned, as they were still somewhat valuable as scrap for building gutters and the like.

The highs and the lows of business are constant. Plans on paper don't always translate well into real-life situations. Mapping out plans B & C are crucial to survival in any sphere of life.

The lessons on strategic diversification were also not lost on us. Had we not expanded the scope of our company's operations by expanding into other markets, products and services, we would have been wiped out for solely depending on the supposedly lucrative steel market....

**SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY.
GO FOR YOUR DREAMS.
AIM FOR PERFECTION.**

EXECUJET

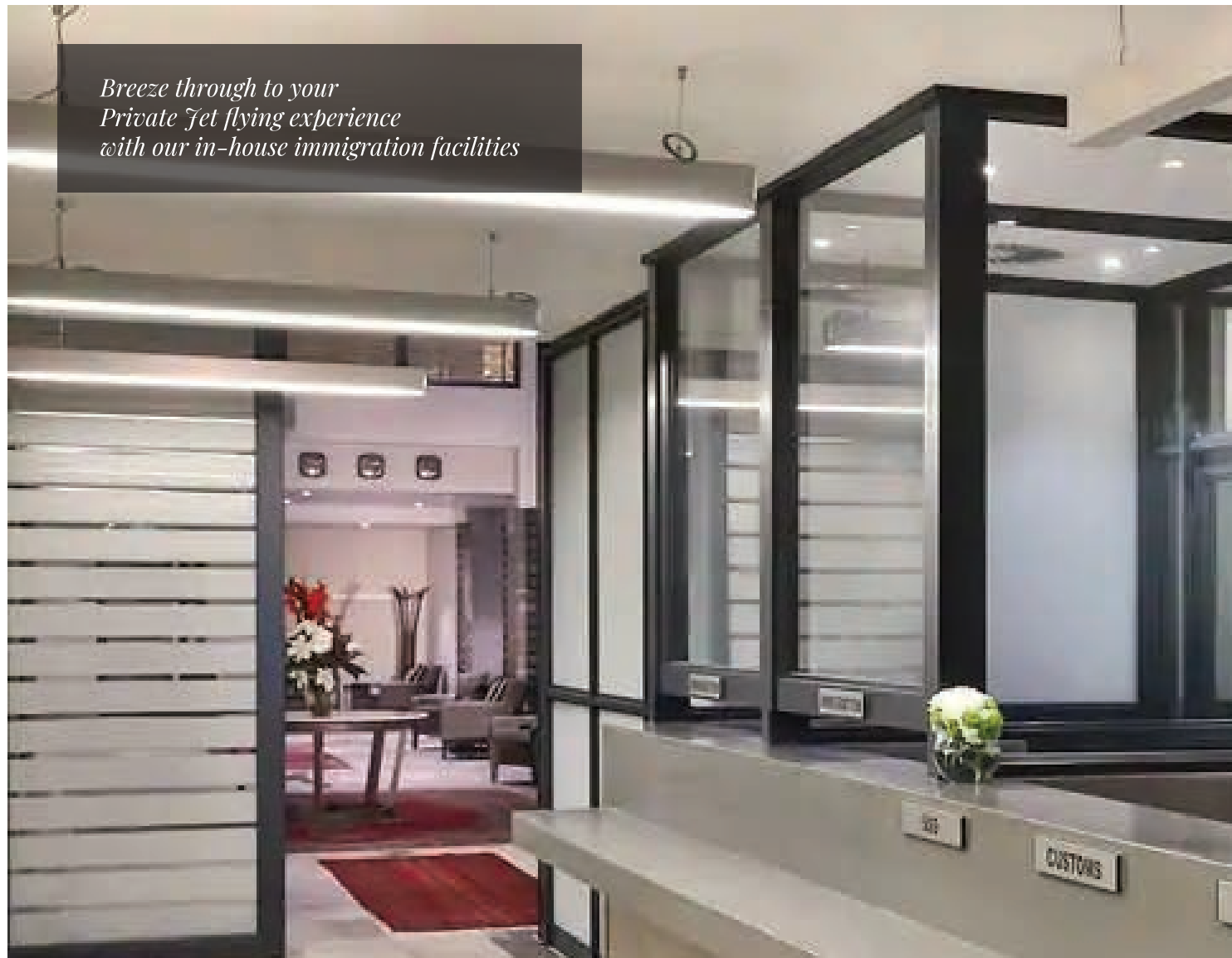
Despite the series of hefty blows we had suffered, there was no backing down.

With the little income realised from other businesses in the Group, we raised a facility to enable investment in an entirely new direction – fixed assets. The idea being that tangible assets are more reliable and less likely than financial assets to fail

during a downturn.

The choice of asset was clear to me. In 1996, when I bought my first aircraft, I had searched for a hangar to park the jet and have it maintained to the same global standards I had experienced abroad. The only facility that offered anything close was Calverton Helicopters, whose services did not extend to private jets.

*Breeze through to your
Private Jet flying experience
with our in-house immigration facilities*



Clearly, there was an obvious gap in the market for aircraft maintenance, and we seized the opportunity to establish **Execujet Aviation Nigeria** as a fixed-base operator (FBO) that offers maintenance, charter and aircraft management services, as part of a turnkey solution. Today, Execujet Aviation is a state-of-the-art 4,700 m² hangar - situated at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport - and is capable of accommodating an aircraft as large as a Boeing business jet.

One important point: The property on which Execujet currently sits was initially a rough, hilly piece of land that no-one wanted to touch. But I thought to myself: 'people plough their way through mountains, so what's the problem?' I only saw an opportunity. We contacted the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) to show interest, and applied formally to the Federal

Government who eventually granted approval to acquire the land.

To really raise the bar, we again approached government through our sister company, Quits Aviation, for approval to offer security clearance to Execujet clients, right at the hangar. The success of our application means that Execujet has representatives of the State Security Services (SSS), Customs & Immigration, and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) on its premises - and that any jet owner landing at Execujet enjoys much faster immigration clearance.'

Currently, between Execujet and Quits Aviation, there are a total of 265 staff on the payroll.





**LEGEND HOTEL LAGOS AIRPORT,
CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON**

No sooner had ExecuJet opened its doors than private jet owners began to fly in their aircrafts from abroad, in order to access our world-class services.

Unwittingly, another market emerged that required attention. While their aircrafts were being serviced at ExecuJet's Murtala Mohammed airport location, the owners also needed accommodation, ideally very close to

the servicing facility.

We listened, and converted this supposed 'accommodation problem' into a premium hospitality venture that everyone knows today as the Legend Hotel Lagos Airport, Curio Collection by Hilton.

'Curio – A Collection by Hilton'™ is a global set of remarkable upscale and luxury hotels hand-picked for their unique character and personality; each one a part of the city they call home. On paper, we had started out planning

***BUILD A TRACK RECORD FOR
CONSISTENT EXCELLENCE.
LISTEN & RECOGNISE FURTHER
OPPORTUNITIES. FULFILL. EXPAND.***

for a 15-room hotel, expanded to 60, and we are now headed for 180, with room for even more expansion.

How did we attract the Hilton as partners? Usually, this hotel chain would only consider partnerships to manage a minimum of 150-200 rooms. But Michael Cooper (then-President of Hilton Africa) arrived Lagos from Europe, couldn't believe the sheer magnificence of the ExecuJet hangar, and realised that a winning partnership could be at play if we applied the same efficiencies at ExecuJet to our planned hotel. We were soon signed up for a management agreement that covered 60 rooms.



With a staff strength of 125 and counting, we are pleased to have welcomed local and foreign holiday-makers, jet-setters, corporate Nigeria, and people like Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg as guests of The Legend.



A track record for quality is everything.

The 60-room Legend currently enjoys 75% occupancy (which is in line with early stage growth projections), and construction is ongoing for an additional 120 rooms.

The extension project includes a Legend International Convention Centre (auditorium, exhibition halls, ballroom, business rooms), which will host 3-4,000 guests at a time. The idea is to drive even

more activity at the international airport area, and turn it into an airport city – along the lines of what Ghana has done. We may soon be in the market, shopping for \$90 million to execute.

However, we are still doing a feasibility study, considering the economic situation of the country.

ETHOS

One of the earliest lessons I learnt as an entrepreneur is that value will always find you as long as you are extraordinary.

When I do anything, I set benchmarks for excellence, and do not compromise. Whether building hangar or hotel, my approach is to seek out the best, starting from architects and engineers who follow international best practice. Whatever you find at Harrod's Aviation in London, for example, you will find even better and more advanced at Execujet.

Likewise, the service standards offered by the Hilton worldwide are applicable at the Legend Hotel Lagos Airport. When we conceived the idea for the Legend, the objective was to exceed a 5-star rating. Today, the Hilton Worldwide will tell you that in Africa, in terms of service quality and finishing, you will not find anything comparable to the Legend.

Across our businesses, the Ethos is a pervasive and undying belief that we will drive a new era of development, growth and productivity.

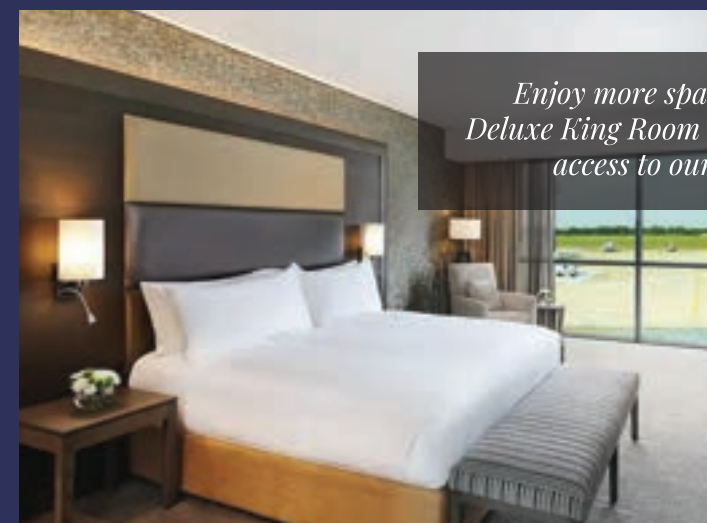
There might be widespread security concerns about Nigeria, but everyone has to lend a hand not to make this a single story.

We are determined that the level of facilities and infrastructure we offer will continue to counter any not-so complimentary narratives about our country.

People never forget how you make them feel. We're in business to keep the customer happy. Always."

END

Immerse yourself in a journey of authentic African Art in our lobby and other public areas



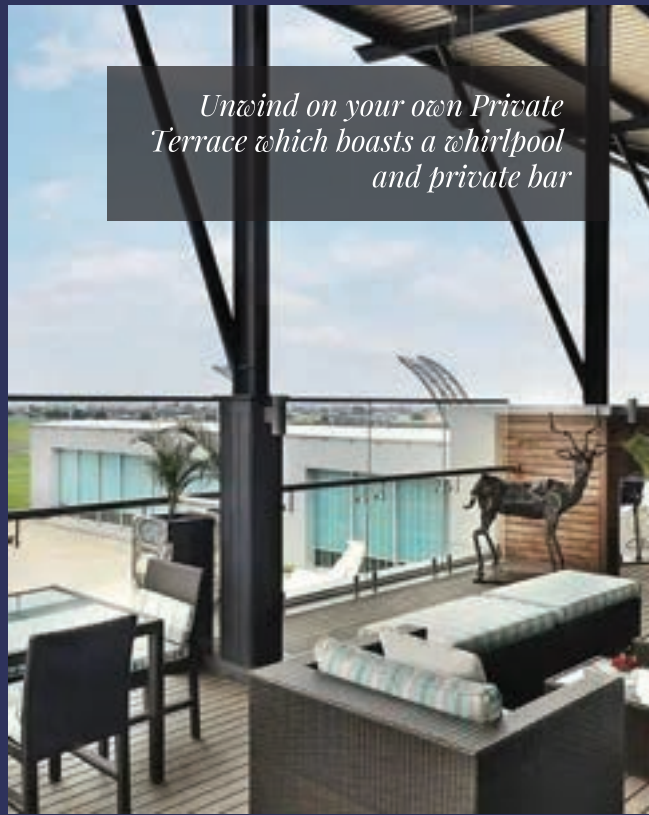
*Enjoy more spa
Deluxe King Room
access to our*



Enjoy a sophisticated dining experience offering premium cuts of meat and fine wine



Bull restaurant



Unwind on your own Private Terrace which boasts a whirlpool and private bar



Work in a 42 sqm office with exclusive access to our Flight Lounge



Network in the comfort of our Flight Support Lounge with access to all day refreshments

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1894-2019

-You First-





SPECIAL FEATURE

LUXURY GOODS VENDORS

NIGERIA 2019

In 1984, Bernard Arnault paid a mere one French franc to acquire **Boussac**, an almost bankrupt textile company. Over the past 40 years, Arnault has not only grown this tiny acquisition into the world's largest luxury group by revenue, but has also become Europe's richest man. In 2018, the sales figures for **Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH)**, at €46.8bn, were more than three times the size of **Kering**, its closest rival.

Global Growth, Africa Untapped

Today, following back-to-back years of strong performance in 2017 and 2018, Africa's global personal luxury goods market achieved €260 billion in sales, and is expected to balloon to €271-276 billion in 2019. (source: Bain & Company, the world's leading advisor to the global luxury goods industry)

Some of that growth is attributable to Nigeria where a new wave of designers is quietly building scalable and sustainable luxury businesses that put quality first, while they manufacture on the Continent.

Across the following pages, we bring you the stories of a crop of emerging local talent: upscale, Nigerian-owned, socially conscious brands that have evolved in such wonderful ways into artisans of unusual pieces.

BOOTS BY METAL

The Budding Shoe Maestro

“I am a trained architect and interior designer with over 15 years’ experience in the building and interior styling space. I have worked in the home improvement industry as interior designer and fit-out specialist, in the financial services industry (building and styling retail outlets), and currently as Creative Director with Adimetal Design Company.

I have always been intrigued by the complexity of seemingly simple things, and how everyday objects affect our style of living. This has led me on a journey into the product design space, which is what I presently do. I strive to make my designs authentic and true to my philosophy that good design should be experienced and not just seen.”

“As a teenager growing up in Lagos (Nigeria) in the mid 90’s, I would look forward to festive seasons and my birthday to receive new clothing – shoes particularly. I would look at my pair of Clarks shoes or Nike sneakers, and wonder how and where they were made. It was puzzling to me that the cobbler down the road couldn’t produce similar footwear.

However, I later came to appreciate that as simple and functional as those branded shoes were, it was a makeup of several parts, and the result of hours of skilled labour, as well as the use of special machines. It became my vision to demystify the process and take on the challenge of making equally good and functional shoes.”

I started in Lagos by learning from great craftsmen who trained in traditional Portuguese design and shoemaking. Then I applied my years of design experience to improve the process, creating prototyping systems that allowed us

review quickly what would work and what wouldn’t. Online resources from the renown Arsutoria School in Milan (Italy) helped me understand the importance of the choice of leather, and how it affects the outcome, comfort and cost of the shoes. I also gained knowledge on how to design footwear for different foot types and several other ergonomic considerations.

Armed with all of this, I commenced the quest to create carefully crafted shoes for the authentic man on a journey, because I realised that the way a man clads his feet shows how far he is willing to go.

My favourite quote is by Louis Nizer: “A man who works with his hands is a labourer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist.”

Our business model centres on sustainable design practices because we truly take care in the production of our shoes. Our years of learning, combined with excellent Portuguese craftsmanship handed down to us, make each pair a delight to the feet, a beauty to behold, and a functional addition to your wardrobe.”

| bootsbymetal.com



“

*I create carefully
crafted shoes for
the authentic man
on a journey,
because I realise that
the way a man clads
his feet shows how
far he is willing to go”*



*Emeka Steve Adigwe
Founder, Boots By Metal*

ZASAHADU

*Doing well
by doing good*

Zashadu is a Nigerian leather artisanal heritage brand, founded in 2010 by Zaina Ashadu. All pieces – handbags, small leather goods, shoes, sandals – are hand-created by skilled local artisans, working with and keeping alive age old West African leather working techniques, passed down through generations. The brand works with local sustainably sourced leathers, farmed exotic skins and rough-cut precious stones set in brass. Zashadu loves to explore the tension between quiet elegance and unabashed glamour, avoiding the use of superfluous fittings and fixtures in order to give precedence to the leathers.

Zainab Ashadu (born 1982) is Creative Director at Zashadu, and has a diverse background that encompasses art curatorship, architecture, acting and fashion styling. She began her career as an actor in London, then moved into architecture where she explored the spatial relationship between geometry and fluidity. Her passion for handbags started at the age of eight, when she fell in love with a clutch bag belonging to her mother. Ashadu has since honed her craft at the London College of Fashion, and currently lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

*Zainab Ashadu
Founder, Zashadu*



“

Zashadu loves to explore the tension between quiet elegance and unabashed glamour, avoiding the use of superfluous fittings and fixtures in order to give precedence to the leathers”

Says Zainab: “The feedback we receive time and time again about the Zashadu marque is that our finishing is excellent, as is our customer service. Collectors also appreciate the simplicity, yet impactful designs of our pieces”.

zashadu.com



Hero evening bag

Season:
Spring 2020 (released at Paris Fashion Week)

Price:
Euros 2,500

Material:
Ayers Snakeskin

FEMI HANDBAGS

Raising the Leather Game



“I run a handbag design and manufacturing outfit called **My World of Bags**, but I’m better known as the Creative Director of **FemiHandbags**, a line of affordable luxury leather handbags and accessories I thoroughly enjoy creating.

I have a Bachelor’s degree in French from the University of Ibadan (Nigeria), and then went on to attend the Institut de Traducteurs et d’Interprètes in Strasbourg (France), under the sponsorship of the French government. All of this, in pursuit of my dream of becoming a translator. On my return to Nigeria, I worked as a freelance translator for several international organisations, including ECOWAS.

In 1992, the tides turned – I tried my hands at making a baby bag for my first baby, became an accidental entrepreneur and spent years creating, experimenting, learning, establishing, and building my niche handbag brand.

A lot has happened since then and in 2017, I created the **Lagos Leather Fair**, a platform dedicated to showcasing the work of leather designers, and connecting the players along the leather value chain, in an attempt to change the narrative within the Nigerian leather industry.

Approximately 18 years after running my handbag business, to be precise in 2010, I applied to participate at London’s biggest accessory show, *Pure London*, and was advised by the legendary Duro Olowu to create and present a handbag collection in leather. Prior to that, I had constantly experimented and worked with different types of material as my medium.

Working with genuine leather proved to be a turning point, and like they say, I never looked back. I enjoyed the process and realised that working with and producing my designs in

leather, as opposed to other synthetic materials, instantly made them more of a fashion statement, and added a certain superiority of style and elegance. It also seemed to be a great way to capture my target market.

Today, we produce an exclusive range of leather goods – from tote bags, top-handle bags, mini chain bags and computer bags, to small leather goods (men and women’s wallets, phone pouches, card holders etc), travel pieces, and limited edition items for men such as briefcases, weekenders and tablet cases.

We have always benchmarked our brand against our favourite international brands, and are therefore very particular about pursuing high standards and exceeding customer expectations. So from the concept to the product itself, to packaging and branding, we do not compromise on the superiority of craftsmanship.

Our handbags are also conversation starters and more often than not, even though there are countless variations of each style, each handbag is handcrafted individually, and is usually a limited edition piece, making the wearer feel very special.

We have succeeded in creating a highly recognisable brand – not only through our vibrant colour palettes, and artisanal, handcrafted touches (such as whip-stitched sides, hand-stitched, rolled handles, and hand sewn straps), but also through the ubiquitous infusion of the African hand-loomed fabric, Asò-oké. This fabric is an unmistakable signature of the brand and a feature that has become synonymous with the **FemiHandbags** aesthetic.”

| femihandbags.com

“

Our handbags are conversation starters and more often than not, even though there are countless variations of each style, each handbag is handcrafted individually, and is usually a limited edition piece, making the wearer feel very special”



Femi Olayebi
Founder & Creative Director,
FemiHandbags

*Aisha Anita Hausa Ugah
CEO & Creative Director
Nichole by Haguanna*



My leather design style is bold, beautiful and classy. It transcends time and appeals to everybody who wants to stand out”



NICHOLE BY HAGUANNA

Positioned for breakout growth

Founded in 2011 by Aisha Anita Hauwa, Nichole by Haguanna specialises in using the best exotic skins in the world to produce high-end luxury leather goods, with a special focus on bags. Since inception, the brand has grown to become a favourite of many Nigerian élites, and continues to make impressive impact on the leather industry. Aisha tells her story:

“My journey into the leather industry was not an accident, but rather a natural progression of my passion for producing exclusive items.

Let me start from the beginning. I studied Law & International Relations as a double degree at London Guildhall University (now called the London Metropolitan University), and worked at Addax Petroleum in Nigeria for a couple of years, before tapping into my deeply creative side to set up a business.

I have always been an imaginative person, a skill I inherited from my mother. Having dabbled with making jewellery, clothes and even candles, it was only a matter of time before leather work was added to my range of design abilities.

I love handbags, and it is unarguably my best accessory.

However, I used to be one of those who spent thousands of dollars on international designer brands, and it ate deep into my pockets, especially the limited edition pieces, which came with extraordinarily steep price tags.

Needless to say, the time always comes when reality demands far more prudence with money. And so I started researching ways of starting a handbag line, which would achieve two things:

first, satisfy my love for bags, and second, fulfil the need to own exotic ones that would be exclusive to me alone. That is how my striking bag-line Nichole by Haguanna was birthed. Today, the rest is history.

Over the years, we have amassed a wealth of beautiful clients, who would rather only buy their exotics from us, despite the growing number of leather designers on the market.

I would credit this, first to God, and also the constant need of our brand to turn things up a few notches. As Creative Director of the brand, I ensure that for every collection, there is something new, catchy and beautiful, accompanied by world-class finishing.

My leather design style is bold, beautiful and classy. It transcends time and appeals to everybody who wants to stand out.

Our prices are amazing for the kind of exotics we produce, using materials such as Nile or Cayman crocodile, Ostrich, all types of snake skin, stingray, and many more.”

| NicholebyHaguanna.com

Obiora Ononye
Founder, Obi Leather



**Leather wall art
by Obi Leather**

(Price on enquiry)

OBI LEATHER

Family Fortunes

Founder of Obi Leather, Obiora Ononye, has been in the leathercraft business for over 40 years. He says:

“I just love working with my hands and got stuck working with leather. Ours is a family-run leather goods production company, with core staff consisting of members of the immediate family. Sometimes we do have support staff, and also have people interning with us from time to time.

Obi Leather produces a wide range of leather goods, from small pieces to larger luxury leather items, and including unusual and intimate products. We are not a mass production company, but instead employ some time-tested skills and styles, in conjunction with special production tools, to ensure timeless authenticity of form and finishing.

The amazing thing about our products lies

completely in its simplicity. We don't really worry about competition because there are only two people doing leather - ourselves, and the rest of them. And if they can make it better than we do, they have made our day. We will simply start buying from them to re-sell, and everyone ends up happy.

Our principal working material remains leather, but human beings like unusual and unique things, so we often use other materials that make our products extraordinarily special.

Knowledge sharing and exchange is one of the fortes of Obi Leather, and this includes conducting training workshops on leathercraft for the benefit of those in the industry.”

| ObiLeather.com



We don't really worry about the competition because there are only two people who do leather - ourselves, and the rest of them”



MINA STONES

Thinking big!

Mina Stones is a vertically integrated social business that is involved in every level of the gemstone value chain – from the mines to market. The company was founded by Lotanna Amina Okpukpara who is a GIA certified Graduate Gemologist and a jeweller. The Mina Stones vision is to showcase the true beauty and value of Africa through handcrafted fine jewellery.

“The inspiration behind Mina Stones creations is rooted in my Nigerian origin, our rich cultural variations, and the abundant nature surrounding me. I have always believed in originality and artistic expression.

As a little girl I was intrigued by gemstones and remember collecting stones as early as when I was 10 years old. I would save them in hidden places because I felt they were alive, special and had intrinsic value. Fast forward to my University days, and I realised that these stones were actually gemstones, which could be found all over the country.

I returned to Nigeria after graduating with a Masters from Lancaster University, and began to research these stones that seemingly spoke to me. It quickly became clear that if there was a concerted effort and focus on this industry, it could become one of the tools for alleviating the poverty that currently afflicts about 99 million citizens.”

I put my money where my mouth was, set up Mina Stones, and we now produce a fine jewellery range that includes earrings, neckpieces, pendants, bracelets, rings, brooches, and cufflinks. All of this in 9, 18 and 21 karat gold or sterling silver (925), and using coloured stones or diamond. We also have a range of personalised jewellery with birthstones and initials.

Mina Stones products are made using both traditional and modern methods. In processing and design, we try to keep our customary styles, while also inculcating symbolisms and shapes from ancient times.

For example, we have an Arewa collection which draws from northern Nigeria, as well as the OlaEdo collection which is inspired by the southern region of the country.

It is noteworthy that the gemstones and precious metals used in production are carefully and ethically sourced.

| minastones.com

“

*As a little girl,
I was intrigued
by gemstones
and remember
collecting stones
as early as
when I was
10 years old”*





Arewa Earrings
#185,000 (\$510)

Lotanna Amina Okpukpara
 Founder, Mina Stones

TPS LUXURY

Taking the retail plunge

Princess Princess Adebowale Odutola graduated from university with honours in Political Science and Law, and lunged straight into private practice to set up a Real Estate company, incorporated as Goldie Investment Company Limited.

But, a keen sense of proactiveness led her to believe that an eventual (and perhaps sustained) downturn in the Real Estate market was imminent. So she did what any shrewd business person would do: diversify. She chose manufacturing, with a clear business case for propagating Made-in-Nigeria products all over the globe through top quality, hand-crafted handbags and a wide range of leather accessories – wallets, luggage, footwear for ladies and gentlemen, and soft furnishing.

Since inception in 2014, TPS Luxury has upended the leather industry, rewritten the rules of local content, and changed the way many Nigerians relate to locally-produced leather ware

Raw materials are locally sourced from the effervescent Mushin Market in Lagos-Nigeria, and a production capacity of 400 exclusive, luxury products is achieved annually.

The company is now a juggernaut of sorts, thanks in part to an emphasis on “high touch” relationships with

“*TPS Luxury is a juggernaut of sorts, thanks in part to an emphasis on “high touch” relationships with clients, after whom bespoke bags are named*”



Princess Adebowale Odutola
COO & Creative Brand Director,
TPS Luxury

clients, after whom bespoke bags are named – such as the recently unveiled **HIK (Hajia Ireti Kingibe) bag**.

Even as global growth fluctuates for luxury goods, Princess Odutola quickly points out that the major asset for TPS Luxury – weaving together indigenous materials, signature leather and classic hand



embellishments — will continue to fuel demand year-on-year.

Standing up to the scrutiny has paid off, with a slew of laurels between 2017 and 2019: The Bella Africana **Best Emerging Fashion Brand**; The **Lead Grand Award for Excellence** in the fashion industry; The President's Recognition Award by the Fashion Designers Association (FADAN); and The **Female Entrepreneur of the Year** by City People magazine.

| tpsluxury.com.ng



The HIK (Hajia Ireti Kingibe) bag

₦180,000





Seromume Ikogho
Founder & Creative Director,
Detail Africa

DETAIL AFRICA

Holding its Own

Seromume Ikogho is the founder and Creative Director at Detail Africa, a Nigerian brand that creates bespoke and ready-to-order premium leather goods (bags, wallets, pouches and portfolios), using the best quality materials, and working with the most talented artisans. His trajectory:

“Three years ago, while working as a consultant for a multinational firm, I observed how several gentlemen that I came across carried either low quality or badly finished leather briefcases. I had just bought a personal work bag from Dubai at the time, and its high quality was in stark contrast to some of the ones available locally.

It made me think that there was a gap in the local market for leather bags, and further research proved my thoughts to be correct. I sifted through marketplaces and found even more imbalance – leather bags for gentlemen were either of superior quality but expensive, or of low quality and affordable.

Clearly, there was a gaping niche that needed attention, and I seized the opportunity with both hands. In no time, I was sourcing the most experienced local artisans and reputable leather distributors in the industry in order to create a team that would produce premium quality, yet relatively affordable leather bags of all types, as well as accessories. This was simply my way of changing the narrative about Africa, and putting the continent on the global stage in terms of fashion, especially regarding leather craft.

Since Detail Africa commenced local production in 2018, the brand has increased its leather product lines to include business and work bags, briefcases for men and women, travel bags, wallets, pouches, backpacks, portfolios and tech cases.

We have also followed our original script closely, anticipating consumer needs by undertaking careful insights, studies, and market analysis before designing and crafting products. This way, our leather goods continue to be all-round winners in terms of functionality, style, and price.”

[| detailafrica.com](http://detailafrica.com)

“

Our leather goods continue to be all-round winners in terms of functionality, style, and price”

₦95,000





Yemisi Oladapo
CEO, SiOD Leather

SiOD LEATHER

Homegrown Leather Champion

SiOD Leather produces an extensive range of high quality, bespoke, handcrafted leather goods, ranging from storage boxes and trunks, luggage and travel goods, to home and office accessories, interiors, furniture and footwear.

Our core business has always been luxury storage boxes, especially our infamous SiOD trunks. We can take the most conventional pieces and convert them into a leather masterpiece. Our custom leather door is just one of our bestsellers.

Although not formalised as a business entity at the time, SiOD Leather started well over a decade ago with an initial sample production of 50 pairs of leather slippers. They were instantly sold, while I was on holiday. This success spurred us on to increase production to cater to retailers around Maryland (USA), followed by significant re-investment in our first operational facility, and finally the incorporation of SiOD Handcrafted Leather.

A more formal trajectory happened in 2007 when a partnership with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) gave us the rights to produce Christmas hampers. Since then, our business has grown exponentially, making us a market leader in the supply of luxury packaged goods.

Today, our production capacity stands at over 1000 boxes per month, with the line's natural extension including trunks, luggage boxes and travel goods.

From inception, we have had a clear vision and understanding of maintaining the integrity and craft of leather for its various purposes. In respecting this art, our goods are handmade, using the most skilled craftsmen and techniques to ensure high quality, bespoke orders for our loyal customers.

www.siodleather.com.ng



Leather Sahara Trunk box

—
₦396,000



We can take the most conventional pieces and convert them into a leather masterpiece. Our custom leather door is just one of our bestsellers”



Abimbola Balogun
Designer-in-Chief & Founder,
Bimbeads Concept



BIMBEADS CONCEPT

Unbridled Expression

“I had always wanted to follow in my father’s footsteps by pursuing a career in Oil & Gas, but fate had a different idea. As soon as I left university with a degree in Petroleum Marketing Technology, I began to apply for white collar jobs, but when nothing materialised, I kept myself busy by tinkering with basic beadwork.

More time elapsed, and there was no offer of employment in sight. And this is when the mind shift happened. I began to love the fact that, with practice over many weeks, I could transform ordinary loose beads and stones into pieces of great value, which ladies were beginning to buy up.

In 2006, I took the leap and founded Bimbeads Concept as a venture that would create wearable art – the most exquisite neck pieces, fashioned from the finest pearls, coral and gemstones.

I am now a master jeweller with many years of experience, and our delicate and exclusive designs have earned us several awards, as well as a spot on a BBC documentary. That eye for perfect craftsmanship has continued to set Bimbeads apart from others.”

| bimbeads.com



Mother of Pearl inspired

Materials:
Green agate, and white mother of pearl

Price:
#60,000

“

I founded Bimbeads Concept as a venture that would create wearable art – the most exquisite neck pieces, fashioned from the finest pearls, coral and gemstones.

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Back of the Book
**RESOURCES FOR
THE ENTREPRENEUR**



THE SCIENCE OF LIVING — 71

What can be done to stay the tide of disease and crime that is sweeping our race down to ruin and to death? As the great cause of the evil is to be found in the indulgence of appetite and passion, so the first and great work of reform must be to learn and practice the lessons of temperance and self-control.

...effect a permanent change for the better in education of the masses must begin in habits formed in childhood and required, the self-control gained, from the cradle, are almost essential to the man or woman. ... by the

Health and Self-control

Of the greatest importance in the perfecting pure noble characters in the world, strengthening to control passions, and refraining from debaucheries, is sound physical health. And, on the other hand, these very habits of self-control are essential to the maintenance of health. It is of the highest importance that men and women be instructed in the science of human health. Especially is youth the time to acquire a stock of knowledge to be put in daily



Dr. Elizabeth Shaw

Stakeholder Management and Change **RETAINING TALENT AND INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION**

THE CHALLENGE

Xandi Denisa is the CEO of FINPLAN, a UK-based company that develops financial planning solutions for people saving for their future.

She had been advised by the HR Manager that there was an ongoing reduction in staff productivity at the company's Africa operation. This had persisted for the past 12 months, and while FINPLAN's HR team had put in place a number of initiatives to resolve the impasse – including an increase in salary – it was apparent that the measures were not working. What had been a thriving business had started to see a high turnover of staff, negatively impacting profits. The average cost of replacing an employee was 21% of the average salary. Something needed to be done to turn around the fortunes of FINPLAN.

ACTIONS

Xandi realised that FINPLAN needed some external insight into the challenges it was facing. Management consultants, KAKULI-Marks, were invited to explore and help address the current HR challenge faced by FINPLAN's North Africa office.

The consultants asked Xandi to call a meeting of all employees based in the region, including Board members.

Says the principal consultant at KAKULI-Marks:

“Having the Board present at a staff conflict meeting demonstrates the importance and sincerity of the communication being delivered, and the company's resolve to make things right.”

At the meeting, Xandi spoke heartily: *“We stand here before you to let you know that we want to understand the issues, and work with you to resolve them”*.

Immediately, she felt the energy in the room shift towards a more positive one.

FOCUS

Following the meeting, employees were put into break-out groups to share their concerns through a facilitated discussion of their issues. This was based on a non-judgmental approach to allow for a no-blame situation. Brainstorming sessions revealed two major staff concerns:

- *Creating an innovation culture - employees desired to work for a company that empowers staff to innovate;*

- *Devising a social agenda - employees desired to work for a company that has a social agenda;*

A plan of action was developed from this, with ongoing communication over an eight-week period, as follows:

- *Speaking with customers who were asked questions about their experience of the service which included the sale, personalised attention, after-sales and whether they felt the company listened to them;*

- *Suppliers were also asked questions regarding the company’s response to problems, and delegating authority to employees in order to deal with external partners;*

- *In addition, three companies that FINPLAN had collaborated with in the past were asked if they viewed FINPLAN as a company encouraging creativity and innovativeness and whether, during their collaborations, they felt that the company values were the driving force behind operations.*



All parties were asked their future aspirations in their involvement with FINPLAN.

THE LENS

The intelligence gathering identified that:

- *The perception of the company was one where employees did not feel that they could express their feelings, as this was viewed as mindless criticism.*

- *In addition, employees felt that they were working for a company that did not care about its customers, with little time allocated to the management of customer-related business issues. This was echoed by the various stakeholders interviewed.*

RESULT

The result was an inclusive programme where KAKULI-Marks harnessed the power of communication, stakeholder management and successful execution of change. This entailed:

- *FINPLAN employees becoming more engaged in the community to enhance financial literacy, by one-on-one educating of people who did not have a savings plan;*

- *FINPLAN employees undergoing continuing professional development to increase their understanding of customer challenges (and improving customer service), as well as expanding their training capability to help people appreciate the importance of the life-changing benefits of a savings habit.*

ACHIEVEMENT

The Management intervention programme successfully brought about a climate of mutual trust that stimulated employee engagement. A more important achievement was a relatively strong increase of 17.2% in productivity over the quarter, after the ‘work-in-the-community’ initiative went live.

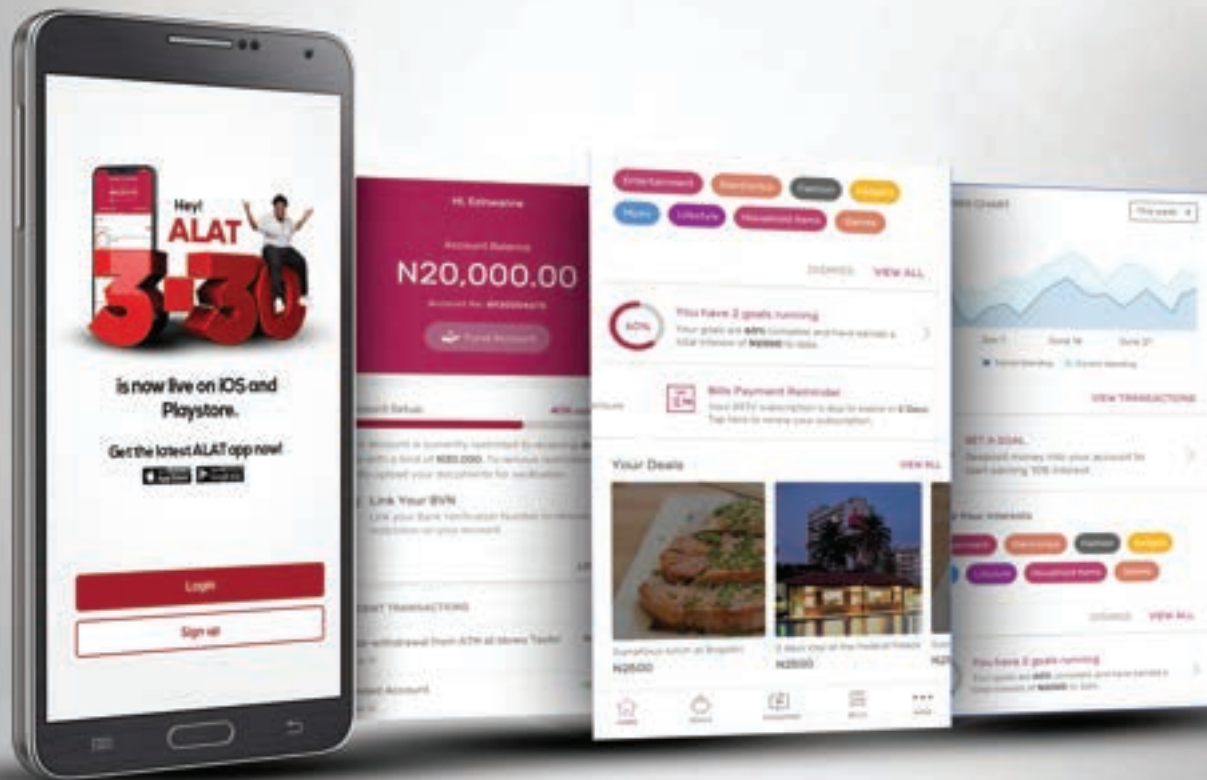
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CEO of Moxie
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COLLECTING ART

The Living Paintbrush
**ADELAIDE
DAMOAH**



Adelaide Damoah Performs
THIS IS ME: THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE SHELF.
 Performance at UNIFOLD Festival. October 03, 2017.

Image courtesy of Jennifer Moyes

She refers to herself as a living paintbrush.

Adelaide Damoah, British painter and performance artist of Ghanaian descent, uses her body as a “living paintbrush” to paint or print onto various surfaces. And there is a story behind it

About 14 years ago (2005), Ms. Damoah left a successful career in pharmaceuticals after endometriosis made it impossible to live a normal life. Bed-ridden and suffering relentless pain, she sometimes had suicidal thoughts.

Instead, Adelaide found healing through Art. While seeking a permanent medical solution, she began to create autobiographical pieces by using her own body as a paintbrush – a printing technique she describes as regaining control over her body. Says Damoah: ‘Art helped me to see something outside of myself and it guided me towards a more positive outcome’.

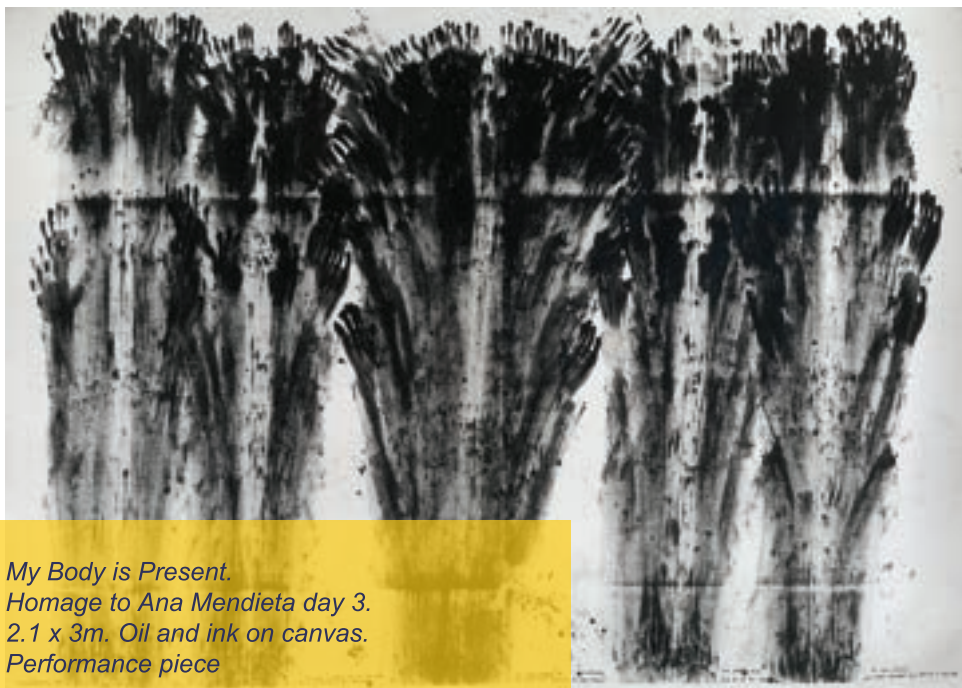
In her performances, Adelaide seeks to engage the audience in a conversation about sexual stereotypes, feminism and specific elements of art history.

Her performances are a direct reference to Yves Klein’s “Anthropométrie de l’époque bleue” performance (1960). In front of an audience, Klein directed naked young women to cover their bodies in his signature blue paint, and print their bodies onto a white surface. Klein selected women who would have been considered the feminine ideal, ultimately creating, in Adelaide’s opinion, “passive female bodies, ripe for objectification and sexualisation by the male gaze.”

Having agency and control over the way she presents herself and her work is essential. When performing, Adelaide presents in a way that is devoid of sexuality to remove the possibility of objectification despite being nude.

In her studio works, Adelaide references the body print techniques of David Hammons as well as Yves Klein to start her work process. After completing the body prints, she uses found images, text and gold to explore personal family history, which ultimately leads to a wider exploration of the history of Britain in the context of its colonial past with Ghana.

| adelaidedamoahart.com



*My Body is Present.
Homage to Ana Mendieta day 3.
2.1 x 3m. Oil and ink on canvas.
Performance piece*



*If Someone Does not Know You,
He May Call You a Beast
(Obi nni wo a, ofre wo aboa bi). 2018.
Pigment on watercolour paper.
134.6 x 94 cm (53 x 37 in)*



*A person alone hurts.(Obaako ye ya).
Pigment and oil on hand made Khadi paper.
116.8 x 147.3 cm (46 x 58 in) 2018*



*This is Me the Inconsistency of the
Self. Day 2. 2.1 x 4m Oil and ink on
canvas 2017. £14,200*



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Customise, Not Standardise

Azaria checks into her \$800-a-night luxury suite. The restroom is exquisite, with ample provision for shampoo, conditioner, soaps and lotions. Towels are plush and plentiful, neatly arranged in a stack. This is brilliant. But where is the facial mist spray? Azaria has a long day of meetings, and must have the mist spray to help keep her makeup looking radiant throughout the day.

Azaria calls the Reception in panic. The young man manning the desk tells her: “We sell that in the gift shop, Madam.” That is unacceptable.

Why isn't there a facial mist spray in Azaria's washroom?

It's not there, most likely because the hotel has neither developed nor converted customer data into information it can use to deliver a customised experience for Azaria.

Yet... yet, catering to the individual is what defines luxury. In the luxury market, customisation IS the critical competitive differentiator. The challenge for any business seeking to deliver a luxury experience is to be knowledgeable enough to go beyond the standard, to have that facial mist hair spray available for Azaria, whether or not she might eventually require it.

This level of **granularity** – about Azaria's needs as a woman, and a business person – is what Artificial Intelligence (AI) can provide, amongst the following benefits:

AI POWERS BOOKING PLATFORMS

In 2018, Avvio, a hotel technology provider, launched Allora, the world's first direct booking platform powered by AI. Allora's job is to drive direct bookings and guest loyalty by arranging better online

experiences. She relies on learning models to analyse large volumes of data, and identify which variations will yield the best booking engine configuration. With the collected data, Allora can have more personalised interactions with guests and move the booking process away from a standard to customised approach.

DATA MANAGEMENT BECOMES EASIER

AI can be a valuable tool for hotels in discovering as much information about travellers as possible. This way, they can tailor the guest experience to meet specific individual needs. AI will be able to sift through data much faster, and also automate a lot of resulting actions. Ultimately, the challenge of collecting and analysing data will be simplified by technology that is smart enough to make strategic choices about guest characteristics and behaviour.

THESE HOTELS ALREADY USE AI

There are a number of standout hotels using AI robots and programs to improve guest experience:



*“The playful personality of Rose (the AI-powered chatbot), has wooed hotel guests who booked direct, into spending 37% more than guests who do not engage with her”
- Mamie Peers (VP, Digital Marketing, Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas)*

MEET
ROSE

TEXT ROSE

702.930.8188

HILTON WORLDWIDE – CONNIE:

Hilton Worldwide's *AI-powered concierge, Connie*, was arguably the first true AI-powered concierge bot. Standing at almost two feet high, Connie is a bipedal robot with which guests interact at the check-in desk. Using the computing power of IBM's Watson AI and travel database WayBlazer, Connie can give a range of tips on what attractions, restaurants, or activities to engage in. She learns from every interaction, so is constantly improving the knowledge and service she can offer.

LUXURY RESORT, THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS – ROSE:

Rose is similar to Connie, but has a mischievous personality. When guests check in to the hotel, a front

desk representative gives them a card that reads: “Know my secrets. Text me,” and “I am the answer to the question that you never asked.” The card bears Rose’s phone number, which you can text for nearly anything you might need during your stay.

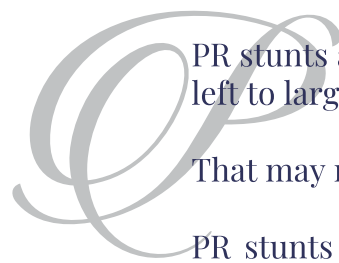
Need more towels delivered to your room? Text Rose. Want to order pizza at 2AM? Text Rose.

In addition to providing restaurant and bar recommendations, Rose can also play games with you, such as *Two Truths and a Lie*, or take you on a tour of the hotel’s art collection.

When asked which slot machines in the hotel’s casino would make one a winner, Rose replied, “You’ll have to play and see.”

When asked what she looks like, she quipped: “If you have to ask, then I’m out of your league,” and then added the “100%” emoji.

Warby Parker Pulls Off Extraordinary Guerrilla Stunt



PR stunts are supposed to be ultra-expensive, and perhaps best left to large corporates that have very deep pockets.

That may not be so correct.

PR stunts CAN be affordable, and done with taste. Thanks to guerrilla marketing.

Otherwise known as ambient advertising, Guerrilla marketing is a creative, non-traditional and many times interactive type of advertising that is typically a low-budget production. The whole idea is to get the consumer to interact with the product in a way that is unexpected, yet memorable.

Here is how Warby Parker, the cult eyewear brand, pulled off a most imaginative guerrilla campaign:

As a newly-founded startup back in 2010, vintage-inspired, prescription lenses online retailer Warby Parker wanted to attract a lot of attention by participating in **New York Fashion Week**. That meant either doing a runway show or a presentation, but the young company did not have the huge resources required.

Instead of giving up, they made up their minds to “gatecrash” NY Fashion Week using **guerrilla methods**.

Warby Parker decided they would hold their own secret presentation on the day before NY Fashion Week was to start. On the day of the presentation, Warby Parker staff took up several seats in the silent studying room of the New York Public Library.

Outside, 40 editors who had been invited to gather at the front of the library, stood waiting, each having been instructed to remain silent about their mission.

In addition, Warby Parker had 20-30 models getting ready at a hotel next to the library.

At approximately 15:00 hours on the day, everyone (editors and models) entered the library.

All the Warby Parker staff that had been holding seats got up and left, and were replaced by the models, all wearing Warby Parker shades and glasses, and simultaneously holding up blue books, titled with different names of the eyewear styles.

While the models pretended to read, the Editors went around looking at the glasses, snapping pictures, and taking notes.

Security at the library ran around trying to understand what was





Guerrilla marketing is a creative, non-traditional and many times interactive type of advertising that is typically a low-budget production. The whole idea is to get the consumer to interact with the product in a way that is unexpected, yet memorable.

going on, but everyone was just reading so it was business as usual.

And while many bewildered genuine library goers were taken aback by the surprise 'hush mob', they also became engaged – maybe considering a purchase, in perfect timing for a return to school.

The guerrilla campaign was a huge success. All 40 Editors wrote enthusiastically about the “blink-and-you-missed-it” event.

And Warby Parker succeeded in stealing the thunder from NY Fashion Week that year.





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SUCCEEDING WITH INNOVATION

It can be very frustrating.

Innovation initiatives are either failing or unable to maintain the capacity to innovate, as many companies – Nokia, Hewlett Packard, Polaroid, Sun Microsystems, Yahoo – have found. Yet organisations like Apple, Amazon, and Starbucks seem to defy the odds. What’s the secret? Adopting these four best practices can help any company drive innovation and growth.

INNOVATION NEVER ENDS: The best companies are constantly paranoid, and make innovation a continuous process. In 2002, Steve Jobs told Time Magazine: “I would rather compete with Sony than ... Microsoft.” Eight years later, after introducing the iPod, iPhone, iPad, and a game-changing retail channel, Jobs claimed victory and Apple Computer became Apple Inc. While introducing the iPod, Jobs said, “Apple is the largest mobile devices company in the world. Larger than the mobile devices businesses of Sony, Samsung, and Nokia.”

ENGAGE CUSTOMERS: Successful growth companies have a deep understanding of their customers’ problems, with many embracing tools such as the [customer empathy map](#) to uncover new opportunities to create value.

THINK LIKE A DESIGNER: Design thinking requires a different set of tools. Growth company strategists have abandoned Porter’s Five Forces Analysis because it assumes that markets have well-defined boundaries, and competitors must fight for market share. Instead they search for uncontested market space and make competition irrelevant using the [Business Model Canvas](#).

LEAD BY EXAMPLE: Unless the CEO makes innovation a priority, it won’t happen. The best growth companies drive a culture of innovation:

When Howard Schultz felt Starbucks was losing steam, he flew in every single shop manager from around the world to help redesign its café experience.

To launch his successful **Think Different** campaign, Steve Jobs commissioned *The Crazy Ones*, a video that featured Einstein, Edison, Gandhi, Muhammad Ali, Hitchcock, Richard Branson, and other “trouble-makers” who changed the world. Every employee understood the CEO’s attitude towards risk-taking and innovation.

Corning’s Breakthrough Innovations

During its more than 160 years, Corning has leveraged its expertise in glass and materials science to produce a long list of highly successful products, including the following.

1800s	
1879	Glass envelope for Thomas Edison’s lightbulbs
1900s	
1912	Glass for railroad lanterns that could withstand extreme temperature changes
1915	Heat-resistant Pyrex glass for cookware and laboratory equipment
1926	Ribbon machine for the mass production of lightbulbs
1932	High-purity fused silica—the foundation of other Corning innovations, such as telescope mirrors and optical fiber
1934	Silicones, a class of materials that are a cross between glass and plastic
1947	Process for mass-producing television picture tubes
1952	Heat- and break-resistant glass-ceramic material used in Corning Ware cookware and missile nose cones
1964	Fusion overflow process for producing flat glass
1970	Low-loss optical fiber used in telecommunications networks
1972	Cellular ceramic substrates used in automotive catalytic converters and today’s diesel engines
1982	Active matrix liquid crystal display (LCD) glass for high-quality flat-panel displays
2000s	
2007	Gorilla Glass—thin, lightweight glass with exceptional damage resistance for smartphones, tablets, and other consumer electronics
2012	Ultraslim, flexible, lightweight glass for consumer electronics and architectural and design applications

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Unique Finds from Around the World
METROPOLIS

Ilé Ilà (translated as "House of Lines") was established by Architect, Tosin Oshinowo in 2017 to celebrate her native Yoruba culture. Ilé Ilà is a lifestyle furniture line designed and hand-made in Lagos, Nigeria.



Àdùnní Collection

Àdùnní (meaning 'daughter of the sweet one' in Yoruba language), is a celebration of African Modernism. This piece of Furniture-Art is proudly Nigerian – the chair's frame is made from local teak wood, and upholstered in two styles, using indigenous Yoruba textile, Asò-oké. The front-end bears Asò-oké Gboro-gidi (solid), while the rear sports Asò-oké Onja-wú ati iho (perforated), both hand-loomed in Nigeria. To further eulogise the country's cultural excellence, multi-talented entertainer, Chidinma Ekile, poses as muse for this shot.



Arm Chair Collection

The 'reading chair' is influenced by the 'Victorian arm chair' – a period from 1847 till 1901 that was considered an era of peace, prosperity, refined sensibilities and grand excess or ornamentation. The colourful assorted, authentic and durable Asò Oké fabrics that adorn the Tunu Okun armchair (pictured) give the feel of palatial prestige, along with all round comfort. The Arm Chair Collection consists of beautiful pieces of functional seats, with quality down-wrapped cushions that create a soft look and feel. This range provides highly dense seating that presents excellent value for money. The muse for this range is Adekunle Gold, Nigerian highlife singer and songwriter.

ile-ila.com



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