

# **Imperatives of Good Image for Enhanced Development**

**Uche Nworah**

**November 2009**

## Introduction

The desire to attain some level of generally acceptable level of development using common indices may seem to be at the centre of all human endeavours. Such desire for many eventually becomes a struggle and a life long one at that. It could be experienced at the individual, community, state, national and international levels leading to multi-level collaborations by individuals, communities or organisations who having been brought together by a common purpose now seek to combine resources towards achieving set developmental goals.

In our recent past, the ASUU/Federal government of Nigeria 2009 face-off and the continuing Niger Delta struggle despite the Federal government amnesty deal readily come to mind. Going back in time, many may still recall the Aba women riots of 1929 and the June 12<sup>th</sup> 1993 political struggle. Still back in time, we can all recall the Nigeria/Biafra civil war and various other social, economic and political struggles.

There are conflicting views and general acceptability of a common definition of the concept of development by scholars due to the developing/developed world, and West/East dichotomies; with the developing world questioning the indices used by the West through multi-lateral agencies such as UN Habitat, UNDP, WHO etc to categorise countries in the developing economies as either (1) The most corrupt country in the world, (2) The worst city to live in (3) The most unsafe city in the world (4) The most crime infested city in the world etc.

For the purposes of this paper, I will adopt the views of Walter Rodney which in my view represents the common aspirations of citizens of countries in the developing world. He argued in his book - *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, that development in human society is a many sided process. At the individual level he said; % implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being+. There is a general expectation on the part of the citizenry that government at various levels (local, state and federal) operating through ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) will play a major role as chief enabler in helping individuals to realise their various aspirations and potentials as captured in Rodney's explanation. Hence, there is a common expression in Nigeria of government providing an enabling environmentq one that complements citizensq personal efforts and helps them to achieve their potentials.

As development workers active in various communities and villages in Imo state, perhaps you may identify with Rodney's views as your various experiences with the clients you work with may have shown that whether it is the market trader at Ikenegbu, the farmer at Mbano, the student at Ulakwo or the widowed mother of 5 children at Okigwe, a common thread runs through their various aspirations, that of hope and desire for a better life for their families. This is to be expected because as Rodney argued, % every people have shown a capacity for independently increasing their ability to live a more satisfactory life through exploiting the resources of nature+.

There is therefore an expectation of improved standard of living which also equates to enhanced development in all our communities. We may not see an end to the disaffection and discontentment with the status quo if our citizens do not see an improvement in the state of rural roads which make it difficult to bring local produce to the village market, the lowering literacy rates and rising mortality rates due to the poor state of available schools and health centres, the ravaging hunger due to the high costs of food stuffs and the increasing difficulty

for young people to access quality education, either due to high school fees charged by private providers or the inflated costs of study materials etc.

## The Development Challenge

In discussing development in the context of Africa, it is important to emphasise that perhaps what many may be referring to is a state of underdevelopment rather than a case of non-development; this is because as Rodney says, "every people have developed in one way or another and to a greater or lesser extent". In the case of underdevelopment, a country like Nigeria could be compared with countries such as Ghana or South Africa with a view to identifying which has made more (incremental) progress since independence using social, economic and political factors relative to available natural resources that exist in the country. Perhaps this was one of the key objectives behind the introduction of the African Union (AU) peer review mechanism. In that case, one may tend to favour South Africa and even most recently Ghana against Nigeria as Nigeria still seems to be lost in the woods, still grappling with multiple challenges ranging from weak institutions, decaying infrastructures, corruption etc. Using 2008 records, South Africa has a higher Gross Domestic Product Per Capita Income (PPP - purchasing power parity) of \$10,600, compared to Nigeria's \$2,200 and Ghana's \$1,400. A comparison could also be made between Imo state, a state created in 1976 and another for example Akwa Ibom state which was created in 1987 with a view to determining which of the two states has managed its federal allocations and internally generated revenues (IGRs) better over a given period. Many may argue that Akwa Ibom and other Niger Delta states remain special cases due to the huge size of their monthly federal allocations as compared to non-core oil states such as Imo state, but the agenda here is not to indict or condemn but rather to draw out institutional challenges which may have bogged down progress and development in such states, as these may be a result of mismanagement of resources.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is an index used to rank countries by level of "human development", which usually also implies whether a country is developed, developing, or underdeveloped. The HDI is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is a standard means of measuring well-being, especially child welfare. In the 2009 Human Development Index report released in October 2009, although African countries such as Angola, Lesotho, Uganda and Nigeria left the "low" category and are now in the "medium" group, but still Nigeria is ranked 158 out of 182 countries. Even within Africa, Nigeria did not make the top 10 highest HDIs which Libya occupies the top position.

Nigeria's case may not be that unique compared to some other African countries, although many will argue that such countries are not as endowed with natural resources as Nigeria. Nigeria and indeed Africa's major challenge has been mainly in the area of poor leadership and weak institutions, perhaps it is no surprise then that The Mo Ibrahim Foundation could not find any African Head of State worthy to be awarded its \$5M 2009 Africa Leadership Prize. Closer home, Nigerian writers and authors were also up in arms with the organisers of the \$50,000 NLNG Literature Prize when it announced that it did not find any piece of literature worthy of its 2009 Literature prize out of the 9 shortlisted works of the nominated authors such as *Itanyo* by Omo Uwaifo, *Love Apart* by Hyginus Ekwuazi, *Songs of Odamolugbe* by Ademola Dasylva, *Eaters of the Living* by Musa Idris Okpanachi and *From a Poem to its Creator* by Diego Okenyodo. The others were Nengi Ilagha's *January Gestures* and Gbinyo

Ogbowe's *Song of a Dying River* Ahmed Maiwada's *Fossils* and A Memory of Rivers by Lindsay Barrett.

Worrying? Sure it must be, especially for many who are development workers as what the two examples I have given may suggest is continued underdevelopment in a millennium when our counterparts in other climes have since landed man in the moon but we are still struggling to get things right in almost all aspects of our national life.

There is some relationship with Rodney's views on development and what the United Nations is trying to achieve through the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These development goals with a target deadline of 2015 are aimed at achieving the following;

- End poverty and hunger
- Universal education
- Gender equality
- Child health
- Maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS
- Environmental sustainability
- Global partnership

The descriptive model which has long characterised discourses on Nigeria's problems and those of the various states including Imo state no longer does justice to her 140 million citizens. Through such analyses which are widely available in various texts and on the internet, we have all come to become Nigeria experts, capable of writing PhD thesis on the problems with Nigeria. Even young school children could easily enumerate the PHCN issue, kidnappings in the South East, the tricky situation of Nigeria not likely to qualify for the 2010 World cup finals in South Africa among other challenges as the problems with Nigeria. This may be the reason for the increasing acceptance of the prescriptive model to discourses on Nigeria as within this framework, attempts are made at least; not only to proffer solutions but also to go a step further and put into practice the various suggestions and solutions.

It may seem that the Governor of Imo State, Ikedi Ohakim recognises the importance of realising the MDGs and has thus included it as part of his administrations *New Face of Imo* project. This ambitious place branding and developmental initiative which has attracted mixed comments and reactions since it was launched is aimed at creating an Imo state brand; a brand that is unique and one that will easily resonate positively in the hearts and minds of Imo indigenes first, other Nigerians, Africans and finally members of the international community. In summary, the *New Face of Imo* project aims to make Imo state a favourite destination for trade, tourism, entertainment and culture.

### **Image Factor and the Rise of Nation & Place Brands**

Many countries are now taking the issue of their country image and brand seriously. The increasing recognition of the power of strong place brands has given rise to two annual global researches namely the *Anholt – GfK Roper Nations Brands Index* and the *Anholt – GfK Roper City Brands Index*. Simon Anholt, creator of the indexes says that the NBI is a report card for countries, measuring the world's perception of each nation as if it were a public brand. Within the top 10 most positively perceived countries, the ranking reveals a strong correlation between a nation's overall brand and its economic status. Interestingly, Nigeria placed a lowly

49<sup>th</sup> in the 2009 index which ranked 50 countries. (Visit [www.nation-branding.info](http://www.nation-branding.info) for full country rankings).

<b>Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup></b>		
<b>Overall Brand Ranking</b>		
<b>(Top 10 of 50 Nations)</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
1	United States	Germany
2	France	France
3	Germany	United Kingdom
4	United Kingdom	Canada
5	Japan	Japan
6	Italy	Italy
7	Canada	United States
8	Switzerland	Switzerland
9	Australia	Australia
10	Spain, Sweden (tie)	Sweden

*Source: 2009 and 2008 Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup>*

As with countries, Anholt writes that, "In today's globalised world, every city must compete with every other city for its share of the world's tourists, investors, talent, cultural exchange, business visitors, events and media profile". This applies to Owerri, Lagos, Aba, Onitsha and other Nigerian cities. One may then wish to explore further, to what extent the local government authorities in these cities and the various state governments have come to the realisation of the challenging task facing them in this regard.

<b>2009 Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index Ranking</b>
<b>(Top 10 of 50 Cities)</b>
1. Paris
2. Sydney
3. London
4. Rome
5. New York
6. Barcelona
7. San Francisco
8. Los Angeles
9. Vienna
10. Madrid

Perhaps, Nigeria's low ranking in the *Anholt – GfK Roper Nations Brands Index* alongside other critical issues, and the non-appearance of any of Nigeria's cities in the *Anholt – GfK Roper City Brands Index* may have influenced the Obasanjo government to launch the *Heart of Africa* image project in 2004. The national image project has now been re-named the *Nigeria Rebranding Project* by the Yar'Adua government. The re-launch of the Rebranding project in March 2009 by Nigeria's Minister of Information and Communications Prof. (Mrs.) Dora Akunyili has generated huge debates and sometimes harsh criticisms. This may seem to suggest that in the light of prevailing harsh economic realities, it may indeed not be such a good idea for a state or city still battling a myriad of social, economic and political challenges to launch a place or destination branding campaign when it has not yet focused its efforts on improving local conditions.

The questions which many may be asking however are; does image have anything to do with enhanced development especially in a developing economy such as Nigeria? Could the money meant for the campaign not be channelled to more critical areas such as education, roads, electricity etc?



**L-R: Logos of the Heart of Africa project and the New Nigeria Rebranding Project**

It is my view that in today's globalised world; (brand) image matters so much. For this reason, many will rather buy a bottle of Eva water for N70, 00 instead of spending N5, 00 on a sachet of water (pure water) which equally contains 50 cl of water. There are those who will rather spend N60, 000 on a Nokia E71 phone rather than buy a cheap Chinese import for N3, 000. Some women are willing to spend thousands of naira on a Louis Vitton bag rather than be seen clutching a cheap Made-in-Aba brand. The issue of brand image and brand perception also influences the purchase of cars; many will spend a fortune just to have a Mercedes Marquee in their garage rather than spend just a fraction of the amount on a cheap Korean import. Simon Anholt, the world's leading authority on nation branding refers to the brand value which marketing adds to products and services as intangible value in his book . *Brand New Justice*. This sort of value also creates a multiplier effect as it enables producers and sellers to charge more for their products and services.

On an individual level, when we meet people for the first time, the impressions we form about them are influenced in the first instance by how good looking they are, how finely dressed they are, how expensive their shoes and watches are, the kind of cars they drive, how they speak etc. In our daily interactions with our families, business associates and colleagues at work, we are constantly exhibiting various vibes (positive and negative), these vibes could be verbal or non-verbal and are picked up and interpreted in various ways by our communication partners.

Sometimes, these vibes are picked up just as we had intended, other times, they are not. For this reason, we must all constantly and consciously manage our communications with others to help us achieve desired outcomes.

Global corporations understand this basic communication rule that man can not - not communicate. Despite their market leadership positions, companies such as Glo, MTN, Coca-Cola, Nike, Microsoft, Nigeria Breweries and Guinness still commit hundreds of millions of dollars and naira yearly to marketing communications campaigns. They do this in order to enhance their brand image and value.

Countries in the developed world have since realised the importance of strategic destination branding campaigns as a competitive advantage in the drive for investment and tourism dollars. This is not surprising for as Randall Frost (2004) wrote; "the image we have of another country says a lot about how we view it as a tourist destination, a place to invest or a source of consumer goods". His views are supported by those of Charles Brymer of *Interbrand* who suggested in the paper *Branding a Country* (2003) that "Countries will compete daily with neighbours or block regions for tourism, inward investment and export sales, There's only so much business that can go around. Those countries that start with an unknown or poor reputation will be limited or marginalized. They cannot easily boost their commercial success".

Arguing a case for the application of branding principles in the marketing of places, Peter van Ham, cited in Rob Ferguson's article *Brand-name Government* (Knowledge Marketing Watch Newsletter, October 2001) says that "a state just like a company requires a strong brand. To rise above the cluttered political landscape, a state must be able to define and promote its vision. While arguing the need for Canada to rebrand itself, Ferguson writes that, "No state wants to be anonymous. The goal, rather, is to have a brand that makes winning friends and influences easy. Building a compelling brand with deep, multi-faceted attributes requires a long-term, team-oriented commitment. It will require politicians and bureaucrats to understand how identity is developed, promoted, and maintained."

Wally Ollins also argues in the book *Competitive Identity* that countries with a chaotic, wretched or turbulent past which are attempting to emerge with a new social, political, industrial, commercial and cultural persona must eventually realise that in order to be noticed in the world at large, and to be assisted in the process of change, rather than lumped together as a bunch of corrupt, useless self-destructive basket-cases, they too will have to take active steps to create a positive identity. "Such identities must be based more around opportunities for the future than today's reality. In this sort of situation, an identity programme can act as a catalyst for change, he concludes. In his own submission, Simon Anholt, argues that a national brand strategy determines the most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategic vision for a country and that this vision should be supported, reinforced, and enriched by communication between the country and the rest of the world.

While Olin, Anholt and the others may have been writing or referring to nations and countries, the communication principles they advocate could also be applied and used by cities, regions and states because as Anholt says, if done well, such a communication strategy can make a huge difference to both the internal confidence and the external performance of a country, state or region. He maintains that there is a correlation between what he calls the "country of origin effects" and demands for goods made in that country as home countries with strong, positive and universally recognized associations of trust, quality and integrity is a major

advantage to its manufacturers. We can see this country of origin effect in action with the kind of negative reaction that normally follows whenever products are presented to us in the market as either 'Made in Taiwan' or 'Aba made' our general reaction is to view such products as inferior whereas 'Made in Germany', 'Made in Britain' and 'Made in America' products are viewed more positively as being of superior quality of which we may be willing to spend a little extra to acquire.

The success of current efforts by the Imo state government through the *New Face of Imo* initiative to create a competitive, distinctive and desirable Imo state brand which stands out from direct competitors (Abia, Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi states), and indirect competitors such as Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Lagos, Osun states etc, will obviously rub - off on businesses operating in Imo state. This will help Imo state to attract further investment dollars that would have gone to other states. But to be able to leverage on the positives that may come out of the initiative, one may still need to ask the questions; (1) Where/Which are Imo state based companies, organisations and brands? (2) Are they prepared and ready to welcome tourists, and intending business visitors? Do we have evidence such as attitudinal change, improvement in quality of customer service and product quality, change in business processes etc to show for this preparedness? The improved socio-political status of a re-positioned Imo state will impact positively on the indigenes and residents of the state because according to Walter Rodney, 'the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole'. This means that if Imo is prosperous, then people living in the state will enjoy improved standard of living. This is assuming that a corrupt-free and focused leadership continues to manage the resources of the state.

### Creating and Managing a Positive identity / Image

Let us play some word game here. Please indicate in the appropriate column what sort of emotions, feelings or image the listed words/phrases evoke in you, are they positive or negative? Give reasons why and finally, suggest an appropriate course of action for the brand managers. (For the feelings and emotions column, enter or chose words such as positive, negative, good, bad etc. For the suggested action, you may simply indicate words such as re-position, re-brand, sustain etc).

S/NO	Word	Feelings/Emotions	Give reasons why	Suggested Action
1.	Anambra state			
2.	U.S.A			
3.	Calabar			
4.	Nigeria			
5.	Imo state			
6.	Niger Delta			
7.	Yarqdua			
8.	Super Eagles			
9.	Mercedes Benz			
10.	Lagos state			

Whether for a country, company, state or organisation, the classic communication model of **5 Ws + 1 H** (Who, What, Why, When, Whom and How) is a good starting point in attempting to create and manage an image, identity and communications programme.

**The Who** . the source or originator of the message i.e. Imo state government, Coca-Cola etc. Critical success factor here is the credibility of the source and this is dependent on truthfulness, performance, past behaviours and trustworthiness of the source.

**The What** . the message, the logo, slogan or the contents of communications to be communicated. In this case, this could be a particular aspect of the *New Face of Imo* project, or a call to action. What should the target audience do after getting the message? Change in attitude or behaviour? Support for a government project?

**The Why** . this refers to the communications objectives. What is the intended desired outcome? What is in it for the message recipients?

**The When** . This refers to timelines for breaking the communication campaign.

**The Whom** . the primary and secondary target audience of the communication campaign. This must be clearly defined from the beginning. This also involves achieving the buy-in of relevant stakeholders.

**The How** . The overall strategy, communications techniques and media to be used, tone of voice etc.

*(Also see Simon Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon, City Brand Hexagon and the Heart of Africa brand value propositions which could be adapted to suit region, state and other destination branding campaigns.)*



**The Nation Brand Hexagon**



**The City Brand Hexagon**



*The Heart of Africa brand value propositions*

Brand Identity differs from Brand image. Brand image refers to how the brand is perceived (positive or negative) from the stakeholders point of view while brand identity refers to the various forms of stimuli and visuals (visible and non-visible) which the brand owners and managers use to represent the brand e.g. logo, architecture, colours, font sizes, customer service, brand collaterals such as letterheads, business cards, corporate stationery and product quality etc. When businesses or countries seek to carry out a rebranding campaign, what they set out to do is to work on some or all aspects of their brand identity with a view to influencing or re-positioning their brand image.

The brand image could be favourable or unfavourable, positive or negative. Brand image could also be further classified into wish image (where a nation, state or company desires to be) and mirror image (the image the stakeholders currently have of the nation, state or company. It is usually after an image audit or survey that a comprehensive plan of action is set out with clearly stated objectives and timelines. Critical success factor here is adequate resourcing, both material and human. Anholt (2003) lists the principles of successful place branding as (1) purpose and potential (2) Truth (3) Aspirations and betterment (4) Inclusiveness and common good (5) Creativity and Innovation (6) Complexity and simplicity (7) Connectivity (8) Things take time.

A strong positive place brand just like the Imo state government is attempting to create will amongst other things achieve the following objectives:

1. Help attract businesses and investments
2. Promote the tourism sector
3. Encourage public diplomacy and build multilateral partnerships and goodwill
4. Encourage home industries and manufacturing concerns and invariably exports (state/country of origin effect)
5. Strengthen national or regional identity; promote discipline, new work ethic, respect and self respect.

While the benefits may make it an attractive objective to pursue, the challenges have been those of funding and resourcing (e.g. Nigeria's Rebranding project only has a budget of N130 Million, this can hardly pay for a week's campaign on major international media such as CNN etc.) Critical success factors are strong political will despite criticisms (The New Face of Imo was described as being only on billboards in an article written by Obi Nwakanma published in

the Vanguard of August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 . %he real new face of Imo must show not only a bold new plan, beyond the promises on the billboard, but also must begin with actual redevelopment and expansion of the urban facilities in Owerri, Okigwe, and Orlu+).

As in all other communication campaigns, high degrees of integration, cooperation and coordination are also needed.

### The New Face of Imo as Case Study in Place Branding Campaigns

Mark Leonard of Demos, in the book *Britain TM* (1997) writes of the need for Britain to rebrand itself. According to Leonard "The main reason why this needs to be done is that a gulf has opened up between the reality of Britain as a highly creative and diverse society and the perception around the world that Britain remains a backward-looking island immersed in its heritage". One may then argue that Governor Ohakim may also have noticed a gulf in the perception of the Imo state brand hence the need to re-position and rebrand the state.

Perhaps not many may be proud of what the Imo state brand evoked in the minds of both indigenes and visitors in the post . Otokoto era when the state became famous for various negative things ranging from ritual murders to kidnapping and haven for 419 scammers.

Therefore, conceptually, the *New Face of Imo* repositioning/rebranding campaign may have started on a good note. It is not within the scope of this paper to review what has been achieved so far, a proper review can only be done after a reasonable period, usually one year, and this will be done using the project objectives and other established performance indicators as basis.

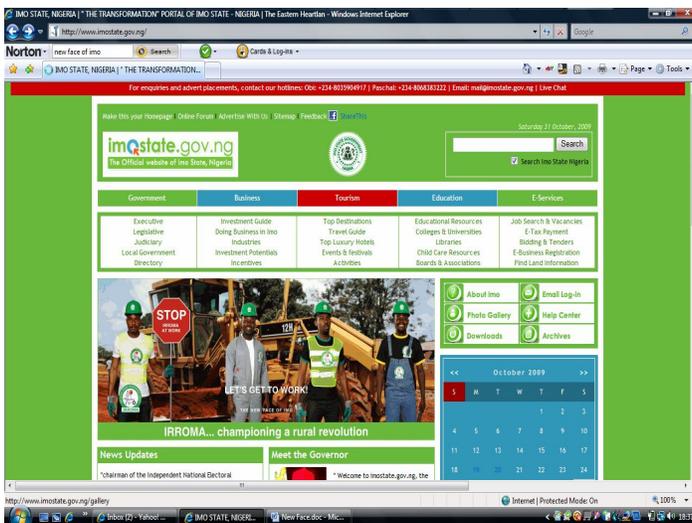
 <p><b>The Clean and Green Initiative</b></p>	 <p><b>Imo Rural Roads Maintenance Agency</b></p>	 <p><b>Sustainable Agricultural Project with South African farmers</b></p>	 <p><b>\$500 million resort &amp; Conference Centre</b></p>
 <p><b>Operation Festival</b></p>	 <p><b>Imo Municipal Transport Service</b></p>	<p><b>Imo MDG Rural Development Projects</b></p>	



Table showing the various *New Face of Imo* projects. Source:



The project could be seen also as the encapsulation of Governor Ikedi Ohakim's agenda for the state. This comprises 6 key programmes such as agricultural, tourism transport and other infrastructural development projects aimed at delivering the dividends of democracy to the people. There are also other initiatives which have received the praise of the Imo people such as the Orient Broadcast stations (FM and TV) which have now given Imo people a voice to tell their own stories better.



The Imo state government also uses its website [www.imostate.gov.ng](http://www.imostate.gov.ng) to communicate its various initiatives. The site is rich in information and is updated regularly compared to other government websites. Perhaps, the federal government of Nigeria through the office of the Minister of Information and Communications should learn from Imo state in terms of designing and managing government websites.

*Screenshot of Imo state government website*

The Nigerian government currently has two websites ([www.nigeriarebrands.com](http://www.nigeriarebrands.com)) and ([www.ournigeriarebrands.net](http://www.ournigeriarebrands.net)) dedicated to the rebranding project, a visit to the two websites will show that they look amateurish and poorly designed. Information on the sites are hardly ever updated as one would expect compared to that of Imo state.

### Marketing Communications Platforms for Change Communications

The following platforms could be adapted depending on budget and other factors e.g. target audience, reach etc

1. Advertising (above-the-line & below-the-line)
2. brand collaterals (corporate stationery, business cards etc)
3. Direct mail
4. Display and merchandising materials (banners, posters etc)
5. Email/Online and Mobile marketing e.g. using platforms such as [www.imostate.gov.ng](http://www.imostate.gov.ng)
6. Information kiosks in key locations
7. Podcasting

8. Promotional events and road shows, fairs etc
9. Promotional items, souvenirs and give-aways
10. Public relations
11. Magazines and other publications e.g. tourist guides
12. Vehicle branding
13. Public diplomacy
14. Architectural branding
15. Video presentations
16. Brand ambassadors (the use of cultural icons e.g. Onyeka Onwenu, Kelly Handsome, Okey Bakassi etc in endorsements, events and other communication materials).

Examples of communication materials used on billboards and other platforms as part of the *New face of Imo* campaign.

A.

**Peace in Imo State**  
THE EASTERN HEARTLAND

Firstly, our state has become clean and green.

With newly acquired security vehicles and motor-bikes equipped with state-of-the-art communication gadgets linking all the Local Government Areas of the State; observation posts powered by solar energy and a crack force of Soldiers and Policemen, Operation Festival has the State fully covered against hoodlums and criminals.

Welcome to a peaceful, crime-free atmosphere in the Eastern Heartland, Imo State, Nigeria.

THE NEW FACE OF IMO

B.

**STOP**  
IRROMA  
AT WORK

12H

LET'S GET TO WORK!

THE NEW FACE OF IMO

IRROMA... championing a rural revolution

C.

**Imo is home to Nigeria's Cleanest City**

Clean & Green

Keep it Clean and Green

THE NEW FACE OF IMO

*Onyeka Onwenu (a popular musician in Nigeria) and Kanu Nwankwo (a famous footballer) were used in this poster as Imo state brand endorsers.*

## Conclusion

There is no suggestion in this paper that effectively managing the image of a place brand such as Imo state will simply solve all the developmental challenges that cities and states face. That would be taking a simplistic view of the concept of reputation management and place branding. However, just as we have seen what multinational corporations are doing with the way they invest in, and manage their brand identities and images, I posit that states, nations and cities will also benefit if they critically appreciate the importance of managing their respective place brands, and investing time and resources in creating sustainable brand identities, one that stands out and helps win them friends, evoke empathy in the citizenry and ultimately help them attract investment and tourism. Research findings from the *Anholt – GfK Roper Nations Brands Index* and the *Anholt – GfK Roper City Brands Index* also show that the way a country or place is perceived can make a critical difference to the success of its business, trade and tourism efforts, as well as its diplomatic and cultural relations with other nations (visit [www.nationbrandindex.com](http://www.nationbrandindex.com) for more on this). Perhaps, the words of Prof. Isawa Elaigwu, a member of the Federal government of Nigeria rebranding committee best captures the importance of image management as it affects nation states, ~~what~~ what is the alternative to not rebranding+he questions.

Most importantly, delivering tangible results in governance has been proven to be the best type of rebranding any city or state can embark on. The Fashola administration in Lagos state has variously demonstrated through its multi-pronged approach in the area of infrastructural development in the state that action does indeed speak the loudest than words . *Eko Oni Baje* they say. This is the most desirable type of rebranding or re-positioning. Hopefully, the Ohakim administration is also on to a winner with its *New Face of Imo* initiative that will truly make Imo state *the Eastern Heartland* it claims.

*This paper was originally presented to members of Development Centres on the "New Face of Imo" project on Thursday, 5th of November 2009 at the Auditorium of Owerri Hotel Plaza, Port Harcourt Road, Owerri - Nigeria.*

## Profile of Uche Nworah



**Uche Nworah** was a visiting lecturer in Advertising and Promotions at the University of East London, and Senior Lecturer in Marketing Communications and Business Strategy at the London Metropolitan University Business School.

Nworah was at various times Head of PR & Events at Sunrise D'Arcy, Massius, Benton & Bowles, Group Head of Internal Communications and later Group Head of Training at Oceanic Bank International Plc where he headed the Oceanic Leadership Academy.

He has written for several academic journals, newspapers magazines and websites and has appeared as a studio guest on CNN with Becky Anderson, and BBC World News with George Alagiah discussing Nigerian, African and global issues, in addition to appearances on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Ben Television and other media channels.

Nworah received the *Jack Petchey Leadership Award* in 2007 for his outstanding work with young people in the UK, The *Chickenbones Writer of the Year (2006) Award* for his witty and incisive writing about Nigeria and Africa related issues and the *Distinguished Alumni Award* of the Business Education Examinations Council (BEEC) in 2008.

He has a B.A in Communication Arts (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Upper) from the University of Uyo and MBA in Marketing from the University of Nigeria (Enugu Campus). He studied advertising professionally and has the industry acclaimed CAM/BEEC Diploma in Advertising. He holds a professional Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), London, and a Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from the University of Greenwich, in addition to certificates in German Language obtained from Volks Hoch Schule, Dusseldorf, Germany and Certificates in Mentoring from the University of East London and University of Greenwich. He is a full member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), The Chartered Institute of Marketing, U.K and The Association for Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, Germany.

Nworah is the author of *The Long Harmattan Season* and *Nigeria Confidential* and currently serves on the Federal Government of Nigeria committee on Rebranding Nigeria. He is also a Jury member of the 2010 Rebrand 100 Global Awards.

His email is [uchenworah@yahoo.com](mailto:uchenworah@yahoo.com).

## References

Anholt, S. (2005) *Brand New Justice*. London. Elsevier

Baker, Bill (2007) *Destination Branding for Small Cities*. Portland. Creative Leap Books.

Clifton, R. ed. (2003) *Brands and Branding*. London: Profile Books

Ferguson, R (2001) *Brand-name Government*

[http://www.knowledgemarketinggroup.com/pages\\_print/oct2001\\_printable.htm](http://www.knowledgemarketinggroup.com/pages_print/oct2001_printable.htm)

Kotler, P et al. (1993) *Marketing Places*. New York The Free Press.

Larkin, S & Larkin, T.J (1994). *Communicating Change*. New York. McGraw-Hill

Leonard, M (1997) *Britain TM*. London: Demos

Moilanen, T & Rainisto, S (2009). *How to Brand Nations, Cities, & Destinations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Nworah, U (2005) *Nigeria as a Brand*.

[http://www.brandchannel.com/papers\\_review.asp?sp\\_id=604](http://www.brandchannel.com/papers_review.asp?sp_id=604)

Olins, W (1999) *Trading Identities*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre

Rodney, W. (1976) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing