

EXPLORING COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines how the different methods of communication namely the radio, television, printed material, telephone and other methods of communication can enhance entrepreneurship development, culture and progress in Nigeria. The paper also explores the reasons why young entrepreneurs should communicate with others, and how communication helps young entrepreneurs and students to progress, develop, learn and earn a living. The paper also highlights the relevance of communication internet and computer as tools for progress and development in the “world of entrepreneurs”. This is because communication as a process of exchanging and transmitting messages, ideas and feelings or giving people information, has helped to make the world a “global village” for broad based business with long term plans. Communication helps to produce young entrepreneurs as leaders in business and industry with external economic cooperation and global entrepreneurship business, with modern and effective communication system in Nigeria, young entrepreneurs will grow robustly, and healthy. They will be able to look for partners with whom to develop country through trade and investment.

Exploring communication as a tool for entrepreneurship development in contemporary Nigeria will enhance better management of entrepreneurship education at various levels in our education institutions. This will further the course of the federal government agenda for promoting entrepreneurship education in the nation and the National University Commission’s effort to transform Nigerian universities to institutions that will produce enterprise creators for sustainable national development. In this direction, modern and effective communication skills are required of youths for entrepreneurship development. These are skills required for starting and managing successful enterprise. The entrepreneur requires effective communication skills to communicate and transmit his ideas across to his audience. Such ideas must be

expressed and conveyed in clear and lucid manner in order to create no room for ambiguity. The entrepreneur must always give people something to feel, something to do. Doing so will increase his ability to lead and drive a successful business. According to Emeka (1998:282);

“Communication can be said to have taken place when information passes from a sender to a receiver and the receiver has acted or responded in a certain way, as a result of the receipt of the information (feedback). The twentieth century has been described as the “Communication Age”, likewise, the 21st century. This is partly because communication technologies have enabled us achieve things hitherto considered impossible”.

Today, communication affects the life of an entrepreneur and determines the outcome of his business efforts more than at any other age. Like knowledge, effective communication is power to the entrepreneur. Since communication is the process of exchanging business ideas and information among business associates. It has helped to make the world a “global village” for broad based business with long term plans. Communication also helps produce young entrepreneurs as leaders in business with external economic cooperation and global entrepreneurial business. Therefore, young entrepreneurs in Nigeria need to grow robustly through modern communication systems, and look for partners to develop our country through healthy trade and investment.

To explore the benefit of communication in Nigeria by entrepreneurs, all channels of communication need to be open and every young entrepreneur in Nigeria should have good communication skills. Non-verbal communication among business associates sometimes breeds conflict and one of the methods to resolve and manage business conflict is effective verbal communication skills. When business associates are in regular communication by speech, letter, telephone, radio, computers etc. it enhances peace, progress and development. Likewise, good roads, railways, water ways, and airways improve business communication links among entrepreneurs across people, cultures and nations. Exploring effective communication skills and technology will help sustain development. Entrepreneurs and captains of industries should create enabling environment to communicate in a common language others should understand. Likewise teachers and students should develop entrepreneurship skills to exchange business and academic information, news and ideas with each other to enhance learning. How many lecturers and students communicate by e-mail in Nigeria today? Parents must be able to communicate effectively with their children and teachers should be able to communicate effectively with students to have a good relationship, so that they can freely express their creative thoughts, feelings and ideas. Gaps on entrepreneurship initiative to communicate effectively sometimes create suspicious, mistrust and conflict.

It is important to note that effective communication methods open up good communication doors to enhance business progress and development. Today in Nigeria,

most entrepreneur enjoys the services of telephone networks such as, MTN, GLO, Airtel, Etisalat, etc. Radio (Radio Nigeria), television (NTA, Channel TV, AIT etc) Computers and internet help people to send message over long distances. For an entrepreneur to communicate effectively with the others, he should speak in a manner to understand each other. If they speak in a language in which they do not understand each other, then they are not communicating. When entrepreneurs communicate, they exchange ideas, information, thought and business feelings. Sending messages across Nigeria by entrepreneurs enhances progress and development in the country.

Hence, this paper tries to examine the different methods of communication to enhance entrepreneurship development as well as reasons why young entrepreneurs should communicate with others as business initiators are the students not among young entrepreneurs. The paper also examines how communication through computer is a tool young entrepreneurs can use to progress, develop, learn and earn a living.

Methods of Communication to Enhance Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

Since Independence, there have been so many methods of communication in Nigeria and the world at large to promote entrepreneurship development. The “media” or “the news media”, which include radio, television, newspaper, magazine and telephone, are the major methods of communication in Nigeria today. These methods of communication send information to many people and entrepreneurs at a time. Thus, each communicate and transmit information in the following manner and device, which include the following:

- i. **Radio:** Radio is a mechanical device that communicate sound message without picture. Through radio, the young entrepreneur can listen and advertise his business initiative by news, music, interviews and plays. Today in Nigeria, most radio stations broadcast commercials; entrepreneurs all over Nigeria can listen to the latest business news wherever they are. Radio keeps entrepreneurs connected with commerce through radio-paid advertisement and this helps them to invest on profit making trade and commercial ventures.
- ii. The Nigerian government began broadcasting in 1957, when it established a chain of radio stations. Most of the country’s radio and television stations continue to be operated by the government. Programs are available in English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and several other Nigerian languages. The country’s international radio service, “Voice of Nigeria”, also broadcasts in several languages. It enhances entrepreneurship development.
- iii. **Television:** Television communicates and transmits messages using sound and video pictures. Through television device, young entrepreneur can actually advertise their business initiative to people. Television has changed our lives for the better by bringing us useful information and exciting business strategies from all over the world. Since independence, television has become more and more popular among entrepreneurs; they can now see people, places and business opportunities they never

could have seen without television. Trade fairs are organized yearly by every state in Nigeria. Television promotes trade and commerce of the entrepreneur.

iv. **Printed Material:** Printed materials comprise of newspapers, magazines, books, letters, mails, reported speeches, official documents and monographs which are important avenues entrepreneurs advertise their products. Some Nigerian entrepreneurs use printed materials to communicate their business messages using printed materials, photographs or drawings. A printed material helps young entrepreneurs to read detailed business information. Some of them can be stored in public and private libraries and the national archives. Entrepreneurs can make use of print material in writing their business proposals. According to Robert (2009), the first newspaper was founded in Lagos in the 1830s. Today, Nigerians choose from dozens of daily and weekly newspapers published across the country, mostly in English, but several in Nigerian languages, especially Hausa and Yoruba. The *Daily Times*, published in Lagos, is the newspaper with the largest circulation. Despite sporadic government censorship and partial government ownership of some newspapers, the press has remained relatively free and has often been outspoken in its criticism of the government. However, the press in Nigeria has contributed greatly to entrepreneurship development and education in recent times, such as, the *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation*, *TELL*, *Newswatch* etc.

v. **Telegraph:** Telegraph is a device or system for sending business messages by electric signal through a wire. Today, many young entrepreneurs in Nigeria use telemarketing to engage in business transaction through the telephone; a device or system used for talking over distances through wires. In 2005, there were only 9.3 telephone mainlines for every 1,000 people in Nigeria. About one-third of the telephones were in Lagos. Major cities in all parts of the country are linked by a system of domestic satellites, microwave towers, and cables. The telephone has enhanced entrepreneurship development and education in recent times in Nigeria. For example, entrepreneurs talk by telephone through MTN and GLO network to enhance the business of buying and selling. Today, many entrepreneurs use telecommunication devices such as radio, internet and computers to transmit their business transactions across nations and continents. Internet services of online banking provided by commercial banks, such as, Skye Bank, Access Bank, First Bank, Union Bank, Oceanic Bank etc in Nigeria can offer the entrepreneur easy payment channels of goods and services which tend to reduce the usage of fiscal cash.

Likewise, **Point of Sales (POS)** machines can also be used by entrepreneurs to sell and buy goods and services with credit card without cash.

Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) can also be used by Nigerian entrepreneurs to withdraw cash for easy business transactions. These are all payment channels explored by communication to enhance entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Other methods explored by communication system to enhance entrepreneurship development, advertisement medium and business messages in Nigeria include:

- ✓ By putting posters on a notice board in a school, hostel, library, church, hospital etc
- ✓ When a young entrepreneur writes messages on a board and walks around a school, hostel, and church and on the street to advertise a product for sale.
- ✓ By putting a sticker on a car, door, bag
- ✓ By speaking to a school assembly, church etc.
- ✓ By using poster system to communicate a message of advert to people all over the world.
- ✓ By using English language or native dialect to communicate with other people.
- ✓ By using music and dance to communicate a message and a feeling to your audience.
- ✓ By becoming a town crier or an entrepreneur whose job is to walk through the town shouting an advert and business official message of a product.
- ✓ By mails through hand, horse, car, train and airways.
- ✓ Micro waves are very short radio waves used by communication industry to help entrepreneurs send across business messages to their partners.
- ✓ With satellite there is progress in communication industry in Nigeria, as entrepreneurs get latest news and weather forecasts. Satellites have brought television, radio, and telephone services to some of the most isolated places in Nigeria and the world at large.

Reasons Why Young Entrepreneurs Communicate with others:

- ✓ To learn and understand new business ideas and ventures
- ✓ To get vital business information
- ✓ To talk about ones own business thoughts and feelings
- ✓ To bring us close to other business entrepreneurs
- ✓ To generate business and intellectual pleasure and initiative.
- ✓ To get a sense of business and entrepreneurship belonging.
- ✓ To get solutions to our business problems.
- ✓ To know the mindset of other contemporary entrepreneurs.
- ✓ To dialogue our business past, present and to predict the future and to understand our business present situation in relation to the past.
- ✓ To access and appreciate other entrepreneur's plan and strategy.
- ✓ To gain business experience from others, so that one can invest wisely.
- ✓ To access what is expected from other entrepreneurs and business oners.
- ✓ To access our business data for public use.
- ✓ To understand the global trend of entrepreneurship development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

How Communication helps Young Entrepreneurs and Students to Develop Skills, Learn and Earn a Living in Nigeria

New methods of communication make it easier for entrepreneurs to receive vital and basic information to develop their skills. Schools in Nigeria, from primary to tertiary levels need a lot of entrepreneurial skills and information included in the school curriculum early in the developmental stages of students and young entrepreneurs. Developing excellent communication skills is absolutely essential for an entrepreneurs success in business, especially for an entrepreneur who need to always posses the initiative, responsive resourcefulness, and vision to achieve his business objective. Today in Nigeria, teachers of entrepreneurship development need effective communication system and information to enhance student's broad based business initiatives and strategies. By giving young entrepreneurs and students of entrepreneurial studies access to relevant entrepreneurship development centres, text books, and journals in the library. Likewise robust studies in computer training, ICT pogrammes, and industrial training centers should be encouraged.

It is important to note that advanced communication has given students and teachers of entrepreneurial studies access to resource training centers to enable them make their research effectively, since many of the resource centers contain film trips and video tapes on various entrepreneurial topical issues, through conference and seminar reports. Moreover, new communication satellite are being built and put into space all the time to enhance effective learning skills.

Many lecturers of entrepreneurial studies and centers in Nigeria always help their students use computer information bank-an information bank is like a library, such that all the information are stored in a computer instead of paper.

In organized schools, learning entrepreneurship development by television is becoming more and more popular; television courses can help you learn creative skills. It helps doctors learn about new diseases and teach young entrepreneurs how to repair their cars, and other basic machines used in industrial training centres. Learning by television has many advantages for an entrepreneur. It can bring courses to young entrepreneurs who live far from school or universities or industrial training centres. It can show young entrepreneurs and students, places and things that they could never have seen in ordinary classroom. Organized television lessons can be stored on video-tapes and shown over and over again to enhance entrepreneurship development and education in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurs use communication to function effectively and language is one of the most important aspect of communication and culture of a people. Through language, ideas are conceived, received, stored and expressed by the entrepreneur. Therefore, language is a major instrument through which entrepreneurs and people all over the world express their ideas, thoughts, feelings and sentiments and through which they communicate with other people.

An entrepreneur would have been an island to himself without language to enhance effective communication with others.

Entrepreneurs and people use language to pass on information and knowledge of commerce and trade.

Therefore, in Nigeria, the essence of developing communication and language that is clear, unambiguous and universal becomes imperative, but this has unfortunately not been the case. This situation calls for change, hence the need for a **lingua Franca** that should be spoken and understood by all since English Language is understood and spoken by the elite and educated ones in Nigeria only. The mass of the Nigerian citizenry from the different ethnic groups have no other means of communicating with one another and this factor hinders entrepreneurship development and education in Nigeria. In most parts of the Niger Delta, the “Pidgin English” is extensively used both by educated and uneducated people, this has to a great extent enhanced communication and entrepreneurship development and education in the region. This “Pidgin English” and the indigenous languages in Nigeria need to be improved upon too so as to make it more functional and enhance its communicativeness value to the entrepreneur. Therefore, the establishment of a National Institute in Aba by the Federal Government and midwifed by the University of Nigeria is a welcome development (Anichebe, 2009:22). Effective communication makes entrepreneurship development and education in Nigeria easier and faster.

Communication and Computer: A Tool Young Entrepreneurs can Use for Development and Progress

Communication and computer are both gift to entrepreneurship development and education, especially, if nourished and explored properly will enhance the entrepreneur and the human race in general.

For example, computer is an electric machine that can store, organize and find information, and do calculations and control other machines. If it is skillfully explored by the entrepreneur. Every successful entrepreneur needs a personal computer to enhance their business world communication. In many supermarkets and industries their sales information is processed by computers. Today in Nigeria, computers are found in stores, offices, banks, factories, schools, and homes. Computers are changing our lives for the better.

A computer can do many tasks; it can help the entrepreneurs to store huge quantities of information with the correct instructions. Computer can help the entrepreneur to do almost anything with correct information. It can add a long list of numbers to keep track of the items or sale in a departmental store.

A computer can use hundreds of pieces of information to forecast business transactions for the entrepreneur through effective browsing of the internet service. A computer can help the entrepreneur to correct error during spelling exercise and calculation.

Computers are important in new communication technology. A computer can be used by the entrepreneur to operate, design and develop new equipment.

How Computers Help Communication?

(1) Satellites are placed in the orbit by space shuttle, but computer controls every aspect of the launch, the light direction and the speed of the space shuttle to benefit science, technology and humanity.

(2) Telephone exchange use computer, computers make the phone connections and keep in touch of long distance calls that benefit global and broad based entrepreneurships business.

(3) Video text system allows skillful entrepreneurs and people to order information from a computer information banks. There are millions of pages in that information bank that can benefit the entrepreneur in broad based business.

Conclusion

Today in Nigeria, new methods of communication have become relevant to develop the entrepreneurship business to make long term plans in the country. Although it is easy to be excited about new communication technology in contemporary Nigeria, we should remember that this new intentions are first tools. They are tools leaders in business find very useful, but they cannot replace people's skill and management. For example, we can use communication equipment to call for help in an emergency, but we still need someone to receive the calls and organize a rescue. Students in remote and distant schools can use new communication equipment to bring television programmes to their classrooms, but talent and skillful people are needed to do useful and interesting programmes to enhance their entrepreneurship education and development. Entrepreneurship development is a link between learning and earning, therefore, skills required of youths for entrepreneurship development and education include: communication, initiative, responsibility, vision, functional education, small and medium scale industries, agricultural programmes and policies and community efforts.

Recommendations

This study therefore makes the following recommendations for exploring communication as a tool for entrepreneurship development in contemporary Nigeria;

1) Since Independence, new and better ways of sending information have been explored in Nigeria. These new technologies in communication have helped entrepreneurs send information faster and farther. Today in Nigeria, it does not matter how far away people live. With the right equipment of NITEL, MTN, and GLO phones, business men and women can still communicate effectively. It does not matter if they live in Borno State or Enugu State, North or South, East or West, entrepreneurs can still communicate with ease.

2) Bowers and Diane (1985:139) pointed out that, sometimes it seems as if we are surrounded by voices and pictures speeding through the air, through wires, and to and from space. We are surrounded by more and more information that travel faster and farther than before. No wonder some people are saying that we now live in the “Information Age”. It is this “Information age” which if explored effectively in contemporary Nigeria will enhance entrepreneurs global development benefit to the country.

3) Nigeria is a large country that is supposed to effectively explore new ways to communicate over long distances. During the colonial period, the colonial masters built railways, roads and telegraph lines from North to South. They also kept Nigeria in touch with the rest of Europe and America. The post colonial period witnessed ways of communicating information through the radio, television and printed materials. These inventions changed the lives of colonial Nigeria even during the independence era. Changes are now taking place in the lives of Nigerian entrepreneurs for the better. Some are excited by the new technology, some are frightened by it. They wonder if the changes it brings will be good or bad. However, communication is what ties people all over the world together. When entrepreneurs communicate, they learn from each other, they help each other; they see their differences and try to understand each other to grow robust by making global business partners.

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