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How Kenyan firms are winning brand loyalty

BRANDING Firms come up with plans fitting the bill of 'real benefits', among them jobs

BY SILVIA MWENDIA

Nestlé Kenya last week joined its parent company in launching the Nestlé Global Youth Initiative that will see hundreds of Kenyans get a job, in a move that could permanently increase brand loyalty.

The company has rolled out a number of programmes, including the 'My Own Business (MYOWBU)' project, which engage youths in selling ready-to-drink cups of Nescafé in busy public areas such as open markets, stadiums and bus stops, while helping operators appointed by Nestlé Professional to manage their street-vending business.

"We have over 650 operators in Angola and Kenya, and we intend to significantly grow this number over the next two years. The programme has created a source of livelihood for hundreds of jobless youths, especially in the slums in Kenya, who are now making between Sh500 to Sh3000 per day," said Judy Mwangi, corporate com-

munications manager at Nestlé Equatorial Africa Region.

According to market researcher Strategic Business Insights (SBI), brands are able to create brand loyalty by delivering "identity-appropriate benefits".

"When a brand meets or exceeds customers' need for certain psychological benefits, the brand engenders brand loyalty," said David Sleeth-Keppler, an SBI member in a 2011 article.

This is now seeing an emerging trend across Kenyan sectors in creating employment opportunities, where unemployment is one of the nation's deepest scars.

The banking industry has been a notable mover in this, through apprenticeships, traineeships and entrepreneurship schemes that are seeing young people absorbed into the labour force at a time when unemployment stands at 12.7 per cent among the working age population, according to the Kenya Country Report for the 2014 Ministerial Conference on



Nestle Kenya has joined its parent in a global youth initiative to create jobs. AFP

Youth Employment.

KCB's Sh10bn 2Jijiri programme, which plans to help 500,000 small scale entrepreneurs through training and easier access to capital to start or grow their businesses, exemplifies this new kind of engagement.

Likewise, Barclays Bank of Kenya has announced that it is investing Sh230m in youth empowerment programmes, part of which aims to impart 70,000 young people with the skills required to start and run a business.

As these and other brands now move to direct interventions to create jobs, they are creating beneficiaries who are likely to carry brand loyalty for a life time.

So great is the impact of unemployment on young lives that the chances of depression among the unemployed are three times higher than for those who

are employed, according to a 2015 study, *Unemployment and Depression Among Emerging Adults in 12 States* by Robin E. McGhee and Nancy J. Thompson.

Addressing such a deep seated erosion of peoples lives and psyches, therefore, has a profound impact in creating a connection with a brand. Kenyan marketer and MD of Biztrace Marketing, Bruce Gumo argues that this creates brand loyalty long after their problem has been solved.

"When you are using a brand and then it solves that problem, and given that the human nature worldwide is generally resistant to change, customers tend to believe that what they have is the best and they stop looking for better solutions once they get the initial solution, whether it is the best or not. It is a psychological need," he said.

-AFRICAN LAUGHTER

THE BIG STORY

BRIEFING

Mombasa

Airtel hosts Iftar for Muslim faithful

Telecoms operator Airtel Kenya last Friday hosted a special Iftar dinner for Muslim faithful at the Ummu Khulthum Mosque. The company also donated water and dates to five mosques in the Coast region as part of its support to Muslim faithfuls as they break their fast during this holy month. The list of mosques that received the donations include Jamia Mosque in Kwale, Masqid Lootah-Buxton, Jamia Mosque in Kaloleni, Masqid Hudaa and Masqid Noor in Kilifi County.

London

AFC and Harith merge Africa power assets

Harith General Partners (Harith) and Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) merged their power sector assets, expertise and experience to create a new energy entity that combines their renewable and non-renewable power generating assets in Africa. The partnership seeks to lead the way in power generation, and the integrated management of power infrastructure assets to deliver the requisite base-load generation capacity. The joint venture's near term portfolio supplies reliable energy to more than 30 million people in at least 10 African countries.



Workers at the Turkana Wind Power substation in Laisamis Constituency Marsabit County. FILE

Nairobi

Lafarge Ecosystems signs deal with Pwani University

Lafarge Ecosystems, the environmental arm of cement maker Bamburi, has signed an agreement with Pwani University that will see the two institutions partner in an array of environmental conservation initiatives. The partnership will see the two institutions enter technical cooperation for building capacity in environmental related areas, with special focus on quarry rehabilitation, biodiversity management and environmental education. The MoU will enrich sharing of information, collaborative research, and enhanced training.

Nairobi

US, Kenya launch Sh34bn health programme

Kenya has teamed up with the US to roll out a Sh3.4 billion integrated health programme, Afya Jijini, aiming to increase access and use of quality HIV/Aids, family planning, and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services. Afya Jijini will work with the Nairobi City County Health Management Team, civil society and communities to strengthen the county health system and improve the quality and accessibility of health services, particularly in the city's informal settlements.