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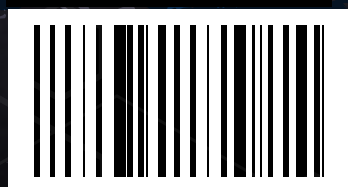
“
**59
DAYS
LEFT**”

**Election 2027:
Building the
Political Brand 101**

- Strategic communications and Digital Marketing professional
- Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) expert

HAS BIG BROTHER NAIJA LOST ITS FINESSE, OR HAS THE WORLD MOVED ON? – Jude Okpara

SEPTEMBER 2026



BIG STORIES

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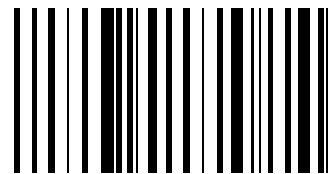


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ADVANTAGE

BUILDING THE POLITICAL BRAND: MSS-08.1



BY
**LOLU
AKINWUNMI**

GROUP CEO, PRIMA
GARNET AFRICA
NIGERIA

A CANDIDATE IS (ALSO) A BRAND

As Nigeria enters another season of heightened political communication, the familiar signs are beginning to appear: posters, billboards, rallies, interviews, jingles, social media posts, endorsements and increasingly energetic exchanges between political camps. But there is a fundamental question that should come before all these: What does the candidate stand for?

That is essentially a brand question. A political candidate is a brand. Not because politics should be reduced to selling soap, beverages or telecommunications services, but because the fundamental principles of brand building apply wherever people must make choices between competing alternatives.

A brand is ultimately about meaning. It is what a name represents in the mind. It is the collection of expectations, associations, experiences and emotions that people attach to that name. That applies to Pepsi Cola. It applies to Peak Milk. It applies to Maltina. It applies to Globacom. And it applies, in a different and much more consequential context, to political candidates.

BUT FIRST AND FOREMOST: FAME IS NOT A BRAND

One of the easiest mistakes in political communication is to confuse awareness with brand strength. A candidate may be well known. His or her photograph may appear everywhere. The candidate may even dominate television interviews, trend regularly on social media and attract enormous crowds at rallies. But ask a voter: **"What exactly does this candidate represent?"**

A strong political brand requires a central proposition from which individual communications flow. Different subjects can be discussed, but they should continually reinforce a recognisable larger meaning. The world's strongest commercial brands already understand this. Nike can advertise hundreds of different products without abandoning its larger territory of human achievement and performance. Dove can execute numerous campaigns while retaining a recognisable philosophy around real beauty. The same discipline matters in political communication. Individual speeches, advertisements, interviews and social media posts should not behave like unrelated islands. They should belong to the same strategic continent.

AND PLEASE, BRANDING IS NOT COSMETICS!

Political branding is also sometimes misunderstood as just visual identity. While colours matter; symbols matter; photography matters; typography matters; slogans matter, none of these, by itself, constitutes a brand. Changing the candidate's wardrobe, producing better photographs or designing more attractive posters may improve presentation, but does not answer the strategic question:

What should this person mean to the electorate? Brand strategy comes before brand cosmetics. The communication team must first define:

- The candidate's positioning
- Proposition
- Values
- Personality, and
- Central narrative.

Only then should advertising and other communication expressions bring that strategy to life. Otherwise, beautifully produced communication may simply amplify strategic confusion.

Read more on Lolu's page on <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/theme-building-political-brand-mss-081-lolu-akinwunmi-jigde/>

Lolu Akinwunmi, current Group CEO Prima Garnet Africa Nigeria and Publisher, The MarCom Strategic Series (MSS)

Your NGO Got **500,000** Impressions. So What Changed?

OP-ED

It's
and

YOUR NGO GOT 500,000 IMPRESSIONS. SO, WHAT CHANGED?



BY
**DAMILARE
ALABA**

SCHOLAR, PGD
MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS
VANGUARD 2026

1 million impressions is not 1 million people changed. Yet too many NGOs still report communication success as though reach automatically equals impact. The game has changed. It's time our measurement changed with it.

For years, development organisations, NGOs and civil society organisations have been asking communications teams:

- "How many people did we reach?"
- "How many media mentions did we get?"
- "How many posts did we publish?"
- "How much engagement did the campaign generate?"

These questions are not entirely wrong. But they are no longer enough. The communications game has changed for those who really know what they are doing. And the Barcelona Principles 4.0, developed by the AMEC Measurement and Evaluation (AMEC), provide a useful framework for understanding where development communications need to go next. The uncomfortable question for many organisations is no longer:

"Did people see our communication?" It is: **"What did our communication contribute to?"** In the regular NGO communications scoreboard, a typical campaign report might present the following data:

- 2.4 million impressions
- 850,000 people reached
- 75 media mentions
- 15,000 engagements
- 3,500 website visits
- 400 social media followers gained
- 12 campaign videos produced

Orwell Magazine



03



It looks impressive. In fact, it may even satisfy a donor reporting template. But none of these numbers, by themselves, demonstrate that communication created meaningful change. A campaign can generate millions of impressions without improving understanding. A beautifully produced documentary can attract thousands of views without changing attitudes. A policy briefing can receive extensive media coverage without influencing the policy conversation. And an awareness campaign can become highly visible without changing behaviour. This is where the old approach starts to break down.

The Barcelona Principles ask us to go further

Barcelona Principles 4.0 establishes seven principles for effective communications measurement and evaluation. For development organisations, three shifts are particularly important. First: start with measurable objectives.

- **First: start with measurable objectives.** Not: *"Increase awareness of climate change."* But: *"Increase understanding of climate-resilient farming practices among 18–35-year-old smallholder farmers in target communities by X% within 12 months."* Now communication has something meaningful to measure.
- **Second: measure the whole communication ecosystem:** Paid, earned, shared and owned channels should not be evaluated in isolation. A radio programme, community meeting, WhatsApp campaign, influencer partnership, policy briefing, media interview and social campaign may all be contributing to the same objective. Barcelona Principles 4.0 calls for comprehensive measurement across relevant channels and stakeholders.
- **Third: move from activity to impact:** This is the biggest shift, stop confusing outputs with outcomes. Think about communications measurement as a ladder with the following rungs:
 1. **Outputs** – What did we produce? (e.g. 50 radio programmes, 30 social assets and 10 community dialogues delivered.)
 2. **Out-takes** – What did audiences take from it? (e.g. Target audiences demonstrate increased recall and understanding of available support services..)
 3. **Outcomes** – What changed? (e.g. More survivors and community members demonstrate knowledge of where and how to seek appropriate support.)
 4. **Impact** – What did that contribute to? (e.g. Communication contributes to increased utilisation of appropriate support services and stronger community awareness around prevention and response.)

Suddenly, the communications report is no longer just a record of activities. It becomes an evidence-based story of contribution. stop celebrating vanity metrics as impact! Reach matters, Engagement matters, Media coverage matters, Website traffic matters, But they are signals, not automatically impact.

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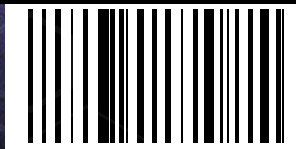
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ALABA
“DAREYCREATIVE,”

DAMILARE

FULL STACKED AND LOADED

SEPTEMBER 2026



- SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC) EXPERT
- STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL MARKETING PROFESSIONAL

COVER

ALABA DAMILARE: FULL STACK AND LOADED



BY **EDITORIAL
CONSULTANT**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ALABA DAMILARE
SAMUEL

For Damilare Samuel Alaba, communication is more than the transmission of information. It is about what happens after the message is received—whether it creates understanding, builds trust, influences engagement and connects an organisation with the people and communities it serves.

A strategic communications and digital marketing professional, Alaba has built a multidisciplinary career across communications, technology, education, development, marketing and social impact. His professional experience spans Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, the United Kingdom and the United States, with work touching areas including migration, healthcare, governance, human rights, peacebuilding, education and digital marketing.

His professional profile reflects a similar breadth. With more than nine years of experience, he has worked across SaaS start-ups, higher education, agribusiness, NGOs, social enterprises and purpose-driven organisations, developing expertise in Social and Behaviour Change Communication, development communications, digital marketing, brand storytelling, content strategy, social media, campaign management, audience engagement and performance analytics.

From Public Administration to Strategic Communication

Alaba's academic foundation in Public Administration gave him an early understanding of institutions, governance and public systems. He subsequently pursued postgraduate studies in Marketing and Communication, including a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing Communications at Orwell School of Communications and Media Studies. This combination has influenced his interest in translating complex institutional, technical and programme information into messages that audiences can understand and act upon.

That ability to simplify complexity has become a defining feature of his professional practice. His work has involved communicating with SMEs, donors, government and institutional partners, media organisations, communities, programme participants, educators, healthcare audiences and development professionals. Some of the areas he has worked in—migration, gender, human rights, governance, conflict mitigation, youth violence and behavioural healthcare—require communication that is not only creative, but also accurate, ethical and sensitive.



Communication with Measurable Impact

For Alaba, creativity and measurement are not opposing approaches. His work demonstrates an emphasis on understanding whether communication actually produces results. At Seefar Foundation, he developed and implemented communications and behaviour-change strategies around migration, gender and advocacy issues in Nigeria. His campaigns reached more than 26 million people within 13 months, while his work also included translating research into multimedia stories, donor narratives, information and education materials and annual reports

His earlier profile similarly records his contribution to campaigns reaching more than 26 million beneficiaries across Nigeria, alongside the generation of more than 1,000 qualified leads with a 52% conversion rate and a 22% reduction in cost per lead through performance-led marketing. At the Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM), Catholic Diocese of Oyo, Alaba served as the pioneer Communications Officer, helping establish the organisation's communications function across governance, gender-based violence and human-rights programmes.



His work included producing impact stories, donor reports and newsletters that translated community-level programme evidence into communications for institutional partners.

Communication with Measurable Impact

The evolution of Alaba's career has increasingly taken him into the space where communication, technology and human behaviour intersect. At Your Lifestyle Navigator, his work involves communications and marketing for AI-powered behavioural-health products. This requires translating complex clinical and technical propositions into accessible communication for decision-makers and end users, while paying attention to issues of privacy, accuracy, responsible representation and trust.



From Content Creation to Communication Infrastructure

At ImpactPal Africa, Alaba moved beyond producing individual communication outputs to helping establish an organisation-wide communications function. His responsibilities included developing messaging architecture, brand governance and editorial standards, while translating Sustainable Development Goals programming into narratives for development professionals, partners and wider audiences. He also facilitated programmes and webinars for young development professionals across Nigeria and West Africa.

The Human Side of Communication

Despite his growing engagement with technology and data, Alaba's approach remains firmly centred on people. His experience in development communications has shaped his belief in human-centred storytelling. For him, numbers establish scale, but stories create connection. Communication must therefore help audiences understand why an organisation's work matters and how it changes lives. This perspective is particularly relevant in an era when organisations have more channels, more data and more sophisticated technologies than ever before.

The challenge is no longer simply getting a message out. It is making that message meaningful to the people receiving it.

Building the Next Generation

Beyond his professional responsibilities, Alaba is passionate about mentorship, knowledge-sharing, evangelism and community development. He has trained and supported emerging marketing and communications professionals and volunteers, contributing to the development of the next generation of practitioners.

His professional journey—from development communications and advocacy to digital marketing, technology and AI—reflects the changing nature of the communications profession itself. Today's communicator is increasingly expected to understand audiences, technology, data, business objectives, social impact and the wider environment in which organisations operate.



For Alaba, these different disciplines are not separate worlds. They are interconnected parts of effective communication. Across his work, a consistent idea emerges: communication should create meaning, not merely attention. Whether he is translating migration research into stories, explaining technology-driven healthcare solutions, developing advocacy campaigns, managing digital marketing or building communications systems, his work is centred on connecting complex ideas with real people.

As communication continues to evolve across Africa and globally, Damilare Samuel Alaba is positioning himself within a new generation of practitioners—one that seeks to combine strategy with creativity, data with storytelling, technology with human understanding, and visibility with measurable impact.

Big Brother

HAS BIG BROTHER NAIJA LOST ITS FINESSE, OR HAS THE WORLD MOVED ON?



PHOTOGRAPHY

BY JUDE
"JAYCEE"
OKPARA

MASTERS STUDENT,
APPLIED STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS,
ORWELL SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATIONS
(MEDIA PERSONALITY|
BRAND STORY TELLER|
REALITY TV SHOW
ANALYST)

A recurring question has dominated social timelines in recent weeks: "Big Brother Naija seems to have lost its finesse and catch... Last season was lethargic especially their presence on mainstream and social media... Is this a communications lapse?" It is a valid observation. But to answer it accurately, we need to separate brand fatigue from communications lapse.

As someone who analyzes the show and interviews housemates one-on-one as a MultiChoice Influencer, I can say categorically: This season's housemates were exceptional and entertaining. Very few were not. The talent is not the problem. What we are witnessing is bigger than BBNaija.

THE GLOBAL REALITY TV FATIGUE

What we are experiencing is a global reality TV fatigue, not a BBNaija-specific issue. Love Island UK and US recorded some of its lowest ratings in years this season. Big Brother Mzansi also struggled with patronage and organic conversation. The audience has generally moved past the era where reality shows were the only appointment viewing. Attention is now severely fragmented across TikTok, streaming platforms, football and short-form content. The cultural monopoly reality TV once enjoyed is gone.

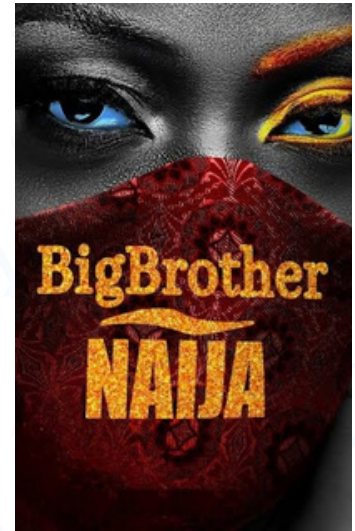
THE NOSTALGIA BIAS

Secondly, there is what we call in communications, "nostalgia bias." Every new season is compared to See Gobe, Double Wahala, Pepper Dem, Lockdown, Level Up, and the most recent 10/10 edition – seasons viewers have already mythologized as "better." The past will always feel more exciting than the present because memory edits out the boring parts. It happens every year.

THE AD-CLUTTER DILEMMA

On the communications part, it is not a lapse, it is more of a strategic shift and an “ad-clutter dilemma.” Mainstream presence is now heavily paywalled. Almost every segment of the show is tied to excess advertorial patronage, which naturally reduces organic conversation on the platforms that matter – Twitter NG, Instagram, and TikTok.

People don't want to engage with an ad; they want gist. The organic PR, the memes, the fan wars and the unscripted moments that used to drive BBNaija are now suppressed by commercial obligations. When everything must sell, nothing trends organically.



So, has Big Brother Naija lost its finesse? No. What has happened is two-fold:

- The genre itself is experiencing low patronage globally.
- The business model now prioritizes sponsorship ROI over organic social currency.

Until that balance is restored – between commerce and culture – the show will continue to feel present on television but absent where it matters most: in everyday conversation.

Jude Okpara writes on media, pop culture and strategic communications from Lagos, Nigeria.



SCHOOL NEWS UPDATE

DEAN'S OFFICE RELEASES AWARDEES SHORTLIST OF NOMINEES FOR COMMUNICATION LEADERSHIP & MEDIA AWARDS (CLMA)

The Dean's Office of the **Orwell School of Communications & Media Studies (Orwell SCMS)** has released the official shortlist of nominees for the **2026 Communications & Media Leadership Awards (CLMA)**, ahead of the School's forthcoming Graduation and Convocation Ceremony. The awards recognise outstanding individuals, organisations and institutions whose work reflects excellence in communications, media, branding, corporate communication, digital media and related sectors. The final awardees will be announced and formally recognised at the **CLMA ceremony**, which forms part of **Orwell SCMS's 2026 Convocation celebrations**.



DR. OGBUNEHU PROMOTED TO FACULTY ACADEMY PROVOST

Director of the PGD & Short Course programme, and member of Orwell SCMS Governing Council – Dr. Kenneth Ogbunehu has acquired yet another Leadership position, as he takes the helm as the Provost of the Faculty Academy. Dr Ogbunehu therefore becomes the Lead Faculty and coordinator of all Faculty & trainers, engaged by Orwell School of Communications & Media Studies.

Congratulations to the esteemed Dr. Kenneth!

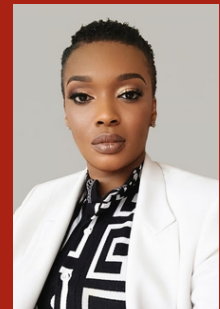




GOVERNING COUNCIL TO FORMALLY INAUGURATE ACADEMICS GROUP AHEAD OF 2026 CONVOCATION

The Governing Council of Orwell SCMS is set to formally inaugurate the Academics Group as part of preparations for the School's 2026 Convocation, strengthening academic coordination and ensuring effective delivery of the School's programmes and activities. The Academics group is led by the Director of Academics & Assessment - Precious Ukeje with Dr. Mfon-Ette as deputy. Other members include Dr. Sebastine Okafor, Mrs. Esther Okoro and Aneke Naza - the Academics Associate Executive.

HR SPECIALIST, ESTHER OKORO JOINS ORWELL FACULTY, DR. MFON-ETTE MICHEAL APPOINTED DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ACADEMICS



The Orwell School of Communications & Media Studies (Orwell SCMS) has announced two significant appointments aimed at strengthening the School's academic and faculty structure. Esther Okoro joins the faculty, bringing her professional and academic experience to the School's growing community of communication and media scholars and practitioners.

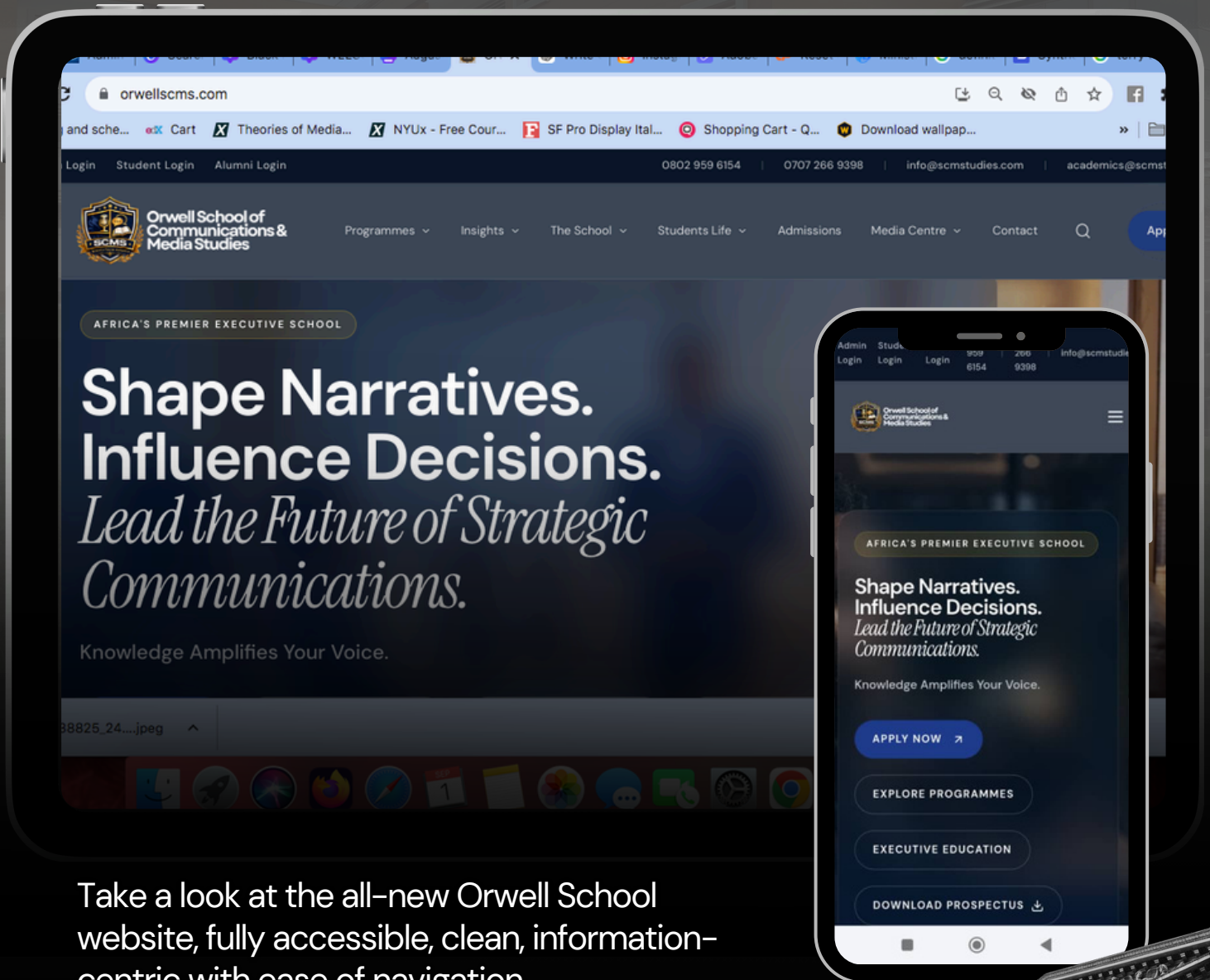
In a related development, Dr. Mfon-Ette Micheal has been appointed Deputy Director, Academics, where he will contribute to the coordination and advancement of the School's academic programmes and activities. The appointments reflect Orwell SCMS's continuing focus on strengthening its academic leadership, expanding faculty capacity and supporting the delivery of quality education in communications and media studies.





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 **10am prompt**



Categories

- **2026 Student of the Year**
- **Programme Director's Award**
- **Faculty Board Award**
- **Best in Academics**
- **Dean's Choice Award**

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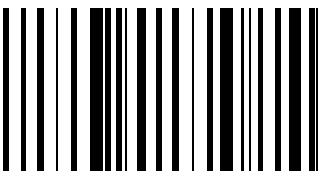


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**ORWELL PROFILE****ESTHER OKORO,
PHRI™**

Faculty, Orwell School of
Communications & Media Studies

Esther Okoro, PHRI™, is a results-driven Human Resources professional and HR Executive with over seven years of experience spanning talent management, recruitment, employee relations, performance management, learning and development, and HR operations.

She currently serves as an HR Executive and Talent Management/Learning Officer at Murphy Ben International, where she supports strategic HR initiatives, leadership development, talent mapping and organisational performance.

Her career includes significant experience managing recruitment and workforce operations, including recruiting over 1,000 staff, training more than 200 employees, supervising large teams, and contributing to measurable improvements in customer service. A passionate advocate for people development and positive workplace cultures,

Esther is a PHRI™-certified professional with additional training in total rewards, HR effectiveness and purpose discovery. She is also an experienced facilitator and speaker, with a professional philosophy centred on people, growth and impact.





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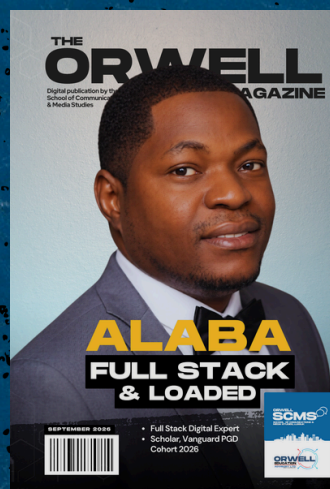
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