

# Kenyan actors can learn lessons from Nollywood

In countries like Nigeria, professional actors are members of functional unions

As the Kenyan film, TV and theatre sector struggles to organise itself, actors still remain as unprofessional as ever. There is neither an operational actor's guild nor a welfare association to address issues affecting them. In countries like South Africa and Nigeria, professional actors are members of unions that have their interest at heart.

To get a glimpse of how the Nigerian actors are organised, *Business Daily's* Mwenda wa Micheni interviewed Shaiibu Husseini, a leading Nigerian journalist and performer. Besides being a critic and historian, he is also a thespian and until recently was the chairman of the Dance Guild of Nigeria. He also works with the leading theatre troupe in Nigeria.

## How does the actors guild operate?

The Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) is an industry driven organisation that operates as the umbrella body for screen actors. So far, it does not cover actors who act for television but its constitution provides for them too. In fact, it is stated in the constitution that the guild is for screen actors irrespective of the media. In the administration of this

powerful organisation that mobilizes and negotiates for the actors, there is a National Executive Council chaired by a president. Under him are six vice presidents covering six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The guild is superintended at the state level by chairmen who constitute the Conference of Chairmen (COC) the highest decision making organ of the guild. There is a board of trustees who work in an advisory capacity.

## Is the actor's guild recognised under the Nigerian law; is it government funded, how influential is it?

AGN is not government funded, but it receives occasional support from government through its agencies like the Nigerian Film Corporation and the National Film and Video Censors Board among other bodies. It is one of the few influential guilds that we have around. It has been exerting influence in the industry.

## Who qualifies to join?

All actors are supposed to subscribe to the guild. All professional screen actors who eke their living from acting. There is room for professionals and non-professionals. One progresses through the



Despite the great potential in the sector, actors remain a disorganised lot who operate in a largely informal environment. FILE

ranks from being an associate member to a full member and then you walk into fellowship once you are categorised as having attained the elders class and having contributed immensely to the development of the guild and the acting career in Nigeria.

## What are the benefits?

The benefits accrued are mostly on welfare matters. The guild assists bereaved or sick artists and also provides support when an actor is involved in

legal issues and so on. There is also an insurance scheme for actors.

## Are there minimum industry rates that producers must adhere to?

So far, there are no fixed industry rates but there are price ranges that apply. Sometimes back in Nollywood, actors in the A-list got as much as one million naira per appearance.

## Who negotiates the pay for actors?

They do it themselves and those who

have managers or agents do it through them. We seem not to have fully embraced the agent - manager arrangement that works in other advanced industries

## Are there any activities around mentoring and recruitment of fresh talent for the industry?

We have an informal mentoring scheme in place and fresh actors are recruited via auditions and reality shows.

# When disaster strikes, how well prepared will you be?



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Disasters are a fact of life. We know that they will happen, but we hope they will not happen to us.

They are completely unpredictable and in most circumstances, there is nothing we can really do about them. How well we minimize the impact on our businesses and our lives depends on logic, planning, effort and ultimately, money.

Disaster planning stretches across a broad continuum. At one end is doing absolutely nothing. At the other end is real-time duplication of everything we do and every system we use, in two or three separate places. We know something can happen to threaten our business at some time. It could be a natural disaster - earthquake, hurricane, fire or flood. It could be an unnatural force such as a power failure, a terrorist attack or a hacker attack.

It might be of interest to find out whether the organizations that you invest in embrace the concept of Disaster Recovery Planning, also known

as Business Continuity Planning. Planning is the operative word as it makes the difference between catastrophe and continuity.

It is a well known fact that the executive of the future will be rated by his ability to anticipate his problems rather than to meet them as they come. As it is said, make your plans as fantastic as you like, because twenty five years from now, they will seem mediocre. Make your plans ten times as great as you first planned, and twenty five years from now you will wonder why you did not make them fifty times as great.

By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail. Business Continuity Planning or BCP, is a process which involves risk, criticality, loss and cost assessment.

Let's take the ICT industry as an example. Here risk assessment is defined as the process of gauging the risk of failure of a network. You assess the risk down to the level of individual network elements that constitute it.

It includes all forces that might cause such a failure, whether as a result of na-



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ture, man or machine. And these can be categorized from low to high.

Critically assessment on the other hand involves gauging the importance of individual computing and communications resources, including computer systems and their resident databases, and telecommunication systems.

The assessment also includes groups of users, the applications on which they rely and the business functions in which they are engaged. The levels of criticality might be defined as very high, high,

moderate and low.

Loss assessment is the process of gauging the monetary cost to the business of a total failure of a specific resource or function. Losses clearly are sensitive to the success of the resource or function, and generally are sensitive to the length of the failure or recovery window. For example, some critical functions might withstand a failure of 15 minutes, and some non-critical functions might withstand a failure of up to 30 days.

Losses can be internal or external. An internal loss may take the form of lost productivity and increased stress on employees. On the other hand, an external loss may result in the loss of customer confidence which translates into the long term loss of profits.

Cost assessment is the final step in the development of a disaster recovery plan. The costs of implementing alternative business continuity plans must be considered in the context of the risks of failure, the criticality of various resources, and the potential losses arising from such failures over time.

Striking this balance is the essence of optimization, and BCP plans must be optimized. There are other constraints that must be considered such as the lack of trained personnel and the time to put a solution in place, but cost is the one that usually gets our attention.

## Operational strategy

In conclusion, Business Continuity Planning should be a key operational strategy for any business willing to embrace sustained long term growth. As is often said in engineering parlance, thousands of engineers can design bridges, calculate strains and stresses, and draw up specifications for machines.

However, the great engineer is the man who can tell whether the bridge or machine should be built at all, where it should be built, and when.