

Nigerian PR industry reforms

The newly elected President of the Public Relations Consultants' Association of Nigeria (PRCAN), Israel Jaiye Opayemi, has assured that the public relations ecosystem would be reformed in a bid to accord the profession its deserved rightful place of honour in the league of other noble professions in Nigeria.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

He vowed that it would no longer be business as usual for unqualified public relations practitioners whom he said are tarnishing the reputation of the profession through unwholesome practices.

Other members of the executives who will be steering the affairs of PRCAN over the next two years are Adedayo Ojo, CEO, CaritasPR (vice president); Tokunbo George-Taylor, CEO, Hill+Knowlton Nigeria (secretary general); Martha Okpeke, account director, MediaCraft Associates (assistant secretary general); Bolaji Abimbola, CEO, Integrated Indigo (publicity secretary), and Raheem Olabode, executive director, CMC Connect BCW (treasurer).

Opayemi, in his inaugural speech at the PRCAN 2019 Annual General Meeting in Lagos on Friday, September 6, 2019, decried a situation where the public relations profession in Nigeria has become a 'Banana Republic' of sorts, where anything goes.

He stated further that, unlike other professions like medicine, law, accounting and even advertising, public relations in Nigeria is one profession in which the barriers to entry seem to be lower as "practically just anybody can wake up and call

himself or herself a 'PR consultant'".

"Let it be known, public relations is a profession regulated by an extant law in the form of the NIPR Decree 16 of 1990; now an Act of the Parliament. We will work hand in hand with the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) to get that law amended, strengthen the sanctions for infringement and work with the Office of the Inspector General of Police to enforce that law," he promised.

Opayemi, who is the managing director/chief strategist of leading PR firm, Chain Reactions Nigeria, read the riot act to those practising public relations illegally in Nigeria that their days were numbered.

Better business

The new President further assured that PRCAN was committed to take on the task of fostering an environment that enables business growth for PRCAN member-firms through his vision and mission statement anchored on seven pillars: Clearer Identity, Stronger Legislation, Stricter Enforcement, Increased Revenue, Better Value, Fair Trade as well as Professional Dignity.

Opayemi also pledged PRCAN's readiness to offer the professional assistance of its member-firms to the Federal Government of Nigeria in crafting a response strategy and a campaign plan to help the positive story about Nigeria as well as shape the current low perception.

Earlier in his valedictory speech, the immediate past President of PRCAN, John Ehiguese, highlighted quackery and non-compliance with set standards as top among the challenges faced by the PR industry in Nigeria, stating that the onus is on PR professionals to come together to stem the tide.

He stated that during his tenure, the leadership fostered a better relationship with the national body, NIPR; raised industry compliance and enforcement; secured the re-admission of PRCAN into the membership of International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO), ensured regular hosting of the PRCAN MasterClass series, PRCAN Breakfast Meetings as well as the PRCAN Gold Medal Lectures amongst others.

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