

Social media conference targets African businesses



By [Walter Wafula](#)

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Ghana will this year host the Africa Brand Conference that is aimed at exposing African businesses to social media branding tactics to help them expand markets for their products and services.



According to Akin Naphtal, the conference director, this year's conference will focus on digital marketing in the face of the fast growing use of social media such as Facebook, and Twitter. The conference will be held in Accra, 3-4 November 2011, following the successful inaugural summit in London, United Kingdom.

"New media has a key role in transforming product and services to greater heights because brands are getting interactive across the world. We have seen the increase in corporate leverage on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media channels in product launching by global corporations", added Naphtal.

"This conference will engage delegates to tap into these effective mediums of communication to strengthen their brands and business profitability," Naphtal said while announcing the 2011 Africa Brand Conference in London.

"Transforming Your Brand in the New Media"

The ABC 2011 is expected to attract up to 500 business executives from across Africa to discuss branding issues under the theme, "Transforming Your Brand in the New Media", Naphtal, who doubles as the chief executive officer of Instinct Wave, marketing firm in the UK, said in an interview.

This year's theme underscores the evolution of global brands in the face of the fast paced social communication channels and new technologies utilized by tech-savvy consumers in the world.

As of June, there were about 2 billion internet users worldwide, 750 million of these are Facebook users. Africa has at least 119 million internet users of its 1 billion people, and approximately 31 million are Facebook users, according to the Internet World Statistics.

Nigeria alone has an estimated 3.4 million Facebook users out of the 44 million internet users in the wealthy nation. "This represents a huge marketing opportunity on the internet and more so, on social networks in Africa for African brands," he

explained.

At least 2 billion videos are watched on YouTube every day. Research indicates that 94 of the world's top 100 advertisers have run a campaign on YouTube unlike many African companies. ABC 2011 will expose African companies to the benefits of exploiting the affordable and effective channels of communication to boost the profitability of businesses on the continent.

"It took ages for African companies to plug into opportunities that exist on internet due to ignorance, the poor infrastructure and high cost of bandwidth. ABC 2011 provides a huge opportunity to learn, network and share experience with peers from around the world." commented Naphtal.

Topics and speakers

Issues to be discussed at the conference include; working with iconic brands and how to keep them relevant today, the role of digital and social media in raising awareness and creating action around social issues, digital marketing, the relevance of social media, and building a collaborative brand among others.

Some of the prominent speakers at the conference will include; Steve Cranford, CEO at Whisper Branding (USA); Afdhel Aziz, the brand director at Heineken USA; Bola Akingbade, chief marketing officer at MTN Nigeria, and George Thorpe, CEO at Market Space.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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