



SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



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For more than 50 years Seven-Up Bottling Company has been a significant contributor towards the development of Nigeria, making it one of the country's most admired businesses

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With its expanding financial, service, communications and entertainment sectors, Nigeria without question possesses all the vital components necessary to be recognised as one of Africa's most important emerging markets. In fact, as of 2012, the country was ranked 30th in the world in terms of gross domestic product and the second largest in Africa. This places it on track to become one of the 20 largest economies in the world by 2020 according to a number of experts and analysts.

As various economic sectors have improved across the country, so too has the quality of life enjoyed by a large number of Nigerians. This improved quality of life stems from all manner of sources, but for around 3,500 men and women it comes from their employment with Seven-Up Bottling Company, one of the country's largest manufacturing companies and distributor of some of the best known, and widely consumed, brands of soft drinks.

From its nine state-of-the-art manufacturing plants, located strategically across Nigeria, Seven-Up Bottling Company produces and markets internationally recognised products including Pepsi, 7Up and Mountain Dew. These are some of the products that the company also markets through its network of more than 200 distribution centres that are spread over the length and breadth of the country.

The company was originally founded by one Mohammed El-Khalil, a Lebanese national who first arrived in Nigeria back in 1926. Originally operating under the name El-Khalil Transport, it began life as a very successful



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transport business, growing into the largest company of its kind in the whole of Western Africa. The metamorphosis of the business came on 1 October 1960, when the very first bottle of 7Up rolled off the production line and out of the company's factory in Ijora.

In the years that followed the growth of the soft drinks industry partnered the growth of the company itself, with it establishing two additional plants, in Ibadan and Ikeja, in the late 1980s. It was then in the early 1990s that Pepsi International took control of 7Up International, a move which opened the door for Seven-Up Bottling Company to introduce another world leading brand to the people of Nigeria.

Today the company retains the same core vision that it has held since day one and that is to become the most admired and innovative company in Nigeria. In order to achieve this it conducts each and every task or operation with a set of core values at its heart. The first of these revolves around the concepts of commitment and ownership. These ideas can be seen throughout the business with

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employees often referring to Seven-Up Bottling Company as “our company”. This is said to reflect the entrepreneurial spirit and sense of ownership that exists within the business, traits that have helped build the organisation into what it is today.

Along a similar vein to the aforementioned characteristics is the sense of teamwork that runs throughout Seven-Up Bottling Company. Its people also carry with them a reputation for unflinching integrity and having high ethical standards. Such qualities have allowed the management of the company to have total confidence that all employees act in the best interests of Seven-Up Bottling Company, a significant level of trust that is also extended in the opposite direction.

As a business that is so closely linked to the development of Nigeria it is not surprising to see Seven-Up Bottling Company doing its bit towards contributing to a better future for the country. One of the ways it is doing so is through the 7Up Harvard Business School Scholarship. Launched in January 2011, the program sees one deserving Nigerian youth selected to have their higher education

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“TODAY THE COMPANY RETAINS THE SAME CORE VISION THAT IT HAS HELD SINCE DAY ONE AND THAT IS TO BECOME THE MOST ADMIRABLE AND INNOVATIVE COMPANY IN NIGERIA”

“THE UNVEILING OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WAS PART OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY IN NIGERIA BACK AT THE END OF 2010”

sponsored at the prestigious Harvard Business School. The scholarship itself covers the costs of tuition, housing and tickets to and from the United States at the start and end of the individuals' course.

The unveiling of the scholarship program was part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of Seven-Up Bottling Company in Nigeria back at the end of 2010, and came as a result of those in charge of the company deciding

that they wanted to create a unique legacy that a further 50 years from now people would remember them for.

The theme of this legacy was to be education, a choice that is particularly significant when it comes to Nigeria due to the complaints that have been raised in the past about the quality of the products and services that came from many of the country's institutions. It was Seven-Up Bottling Company's desire to take

measures to help reverse this trend, however it did not want to simply replicate what other organisations have done, and continue to do, which is provide funding towards professional training in one of the country's universities. In wanting to be unique the company devised the Harvard Business School Scholarship.

As previous winners, Misan Rewane in 2011 and Olujimi Williams in 2012, can attest, there is no bond attached to the recipient of the scholarship and they are not tied into working for Seven-Up Bottling Company upon their graduation. All that is asked of the recipients is that they eventually return to Nigeria, this could be some years after graduating Harvard Business School during which time they can acquire greater business experience in the US, at which time their skills can contribute

further to Nigeria's national development.

Many prominent Nigerians have walked a similar career path in their lifetime, including current Minister of Finance Dr Ngozi Okwonjo-Iweala and the Minister for Commerce and Investment, Dr Segun Agagan who at one point held the position of Managing Director at Sach & Sach Corporation in the US. There are of course countless other individuals in both the public and private sectors silently doing their part in making national development a reality and Seven-Up Bottling Company is proud to be contributing in its own way. **BE**

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