

UBONG KING

PENETRATING **YOUR**
MARKET



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Penetrating Your Market

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ISBN: 978-978-950-087-1 (Hard Copy)

ISBN: 978-978-950-088-8 (E-Version)

Illustrations by HTT Communications

Cover Design by Purple Patch Consults

First printed in October 2015, by HTT Communications Ltd, Nigeria.

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All scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.

Printed and Bound in Nigeria.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all aspiring business men who have had to contend with life's harsh realities, though beaten and ignored, yet still looking for a path to hope.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge several men that have taught and shaped me and whose imprint on my life has brought me to this stage: Chief Patrick Keku, who taught me the passion of the business, Chibuzor Obi, who taught me the technology of the job, Deji Bamgbose, who taught me the business and Charles Nwodo Jnr., who taught me corporate governance. Also, the entire management and staff of HTT Communications Ltd, who saw to it that my thoughts are brilliantly documented; Martin Nyamadi and Disi Okorogri who showed me how to turn a company from zero to one step ahead of its contemporaries.

Preface

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, “When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘Let us pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land.”

When you tell the average Nigerian about improving his life, the usual response is “When God does it” and “God will provide.” Going to the embassy? “Let’s pray that they will give the visa.” Prayer has become the norm, which in itself is not a bad thing, except that the religious mindset has made him torpid. His thinking has entered into a cave; he thinks that God is the one to do it. The truth is that God did everything that was necessary and after seven days He rested from His labour. Gen 2: 2:

² And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

The remaining part is for us to do.

If you want to start a business, or have been in business for less than three years, this book is for you. In this book

I will show potential entrepreneurs how to start their companies with minimum capital or without capital, how to launch a new business into the market, and how to define their market space. I will also show existing companies how to creatively look at competition, and use the competition to grow, as well as how to remodel their strategies using competitive intelligence tools to penetrate the market.

My objective here is to tamper with your thinking; “normal” has never worked. As you begin this book, say to yourself, “I am going to change the way I think.”

The Problem with Africa

I have often said that the problem with Africa is free food. Some of you reading this book right now are over 20 years old, maybe even 35, and still living in your parents' homes. You wake up in the morning, say, 8:30, ask your mum for food, and she gives you four or six big slices of yam with good pepper sauce and chicken, and then places glasses of juice and water on your tray as well. You wolf this down and then you feel sleepy – because the yam will expand in your stomach – and so you go to bed.

When you wake up by 1:00 p.m., the housemaid has loaded four wraps of fufu with ogbono soup full of shaki, roundabout, goat meat, and dried fish. You swallow that, and you sleep. You wake up by 4:00 p.m. to watch Arsenal play Manchester United, Chelsea, West Ham, Man City, or any other sports or movie. By 6:00 p.m. your sister is back from work and she prepares fried plantain and fried eggs, with some cold juice. You say, “Sister, sister,” and she dishes your own portion. You eat that and then have your bath, ready to hit the town on a night out. You hang out with your boys eating bush meat and chicken, and then return home to start the process the next day.

After four years, you say that there is a witch in your house. Dear reader, I submit to you that the witches are your mother and your sister, because the free food they fed you has spoilt your thinking.

I am happy you picked up this book, and decided to trust that buying it and reading it would not be in vain. Let me tell you a little about myself.

My Journey from Zero to Surplus

I am a Nigerian from Akwa Ibom State. I graduated from the University of Calabar, and I've spent over 20 years in my industry. I graduated in the year 1997, with a third class degree and an extra year. NYSC did not even recognize me, so I didn't go for NYSC. All of this, of course, meant that I was not a candidate for employment.

I was somebody whose mother was not ready to associate with him. I was disowned, rejected and thrown away. My father died in 1985, and life took a different turn for the worse. I had been forgotten as a son who existed.

Today, I am a graduate of the Lagos Business School. I am the president of one of the alumni classes, Senior Management Programme 47th Class. I am a board member of the Nigeria-Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce. I have had over 20 years' experience in the security industry. I started as a bodyguard and then I went into emergency response, telecoms security. I was responsible for the protection of all MTN sites nationwide when I served in Halogen Security Company. My responsibility was from Maiduguri to Sokoto to Bayelsa; I

have been everywhere in this country in service as part of my work.

From telecoms security, I went into banking security. I was General Manager, security for an outsourcing company called XL management services with operations nationwide.

From there, I went into oil and gas security, which I will throw more light on later. I started my company in 2009 after I resigned honourably during the heat of the recession. I was off the cover of my former company in HMO and salary, and I had to find a way to survive. I had been earning N350,000 at that time as salary, and I resigned – with a beautiful wife and three children at home. I had one car, a BMW 5 series that was driving me and not the other way round. I had to stop after 4 kilometres; if I didn't stop, it would stop. So I had to stop, open the radiator and feed it 8 litres of water, then look for 8 litres more to keep in the boot because after another 4 kilometres I would repeat the process.

At that time, I had a spare parts dealer at Ladipo, his name was Ukwa. Ukwa would tell me the date that car would stop, and true to his word, it would stop on that day. Sometimes, it would stop a day before, destabilizing

me. One day, I got angry and I sold the car to Ukwa, for N170, 000 which I sowed as a seed.

Now, everyone reading this book has their faith hinged on something or someone. I had neither mother nor father, but the Bible says God is the Father to the fatherless. I took that N170, 000 and I didn't give it to a pastor. I put it in an offering basket and trusted that God would see it. I said, "Enough is enough."

This is 2015, and I have a large pool of cars. My staff strength is 3 digits. That is what God can do. God did not come to me and give me the money, let me make that very clear. He gave me a passion. The Bible says that He gave to every man "according to his own ability". Matthew 25:15:

"And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability..."

So you carry something inside of you that needs to be sold and marketed. You need to **PENETRATE YOUR MARKET.**

Are You a Vulture or an Eagle?

The difference between a vulture and an eagle is APPETITE. They are both from the same family, accipitridae. The difference is in what they want to eat. The vulture will wait for the animal to be sick, wait for it to die, and then go and eat it. An eagle, however, will not eat dead animals.

A vulture will wait for 30 days and collect salary after the MD has eaten his own, given to his friends, paid house rent, and then travelled to London to chill. Whatever is left – if anything – is paid as salary to the vulture, sometimes on the 14th of the next month! An eagle does not eat dead animals or pass-me-down; it kills its own to eat. A wise man said, “You cannot be rich working for another man.” It is a poor man that will work for somebody in a company where there is no future. It is punishment. I am writing this book to provoke you to greatness.

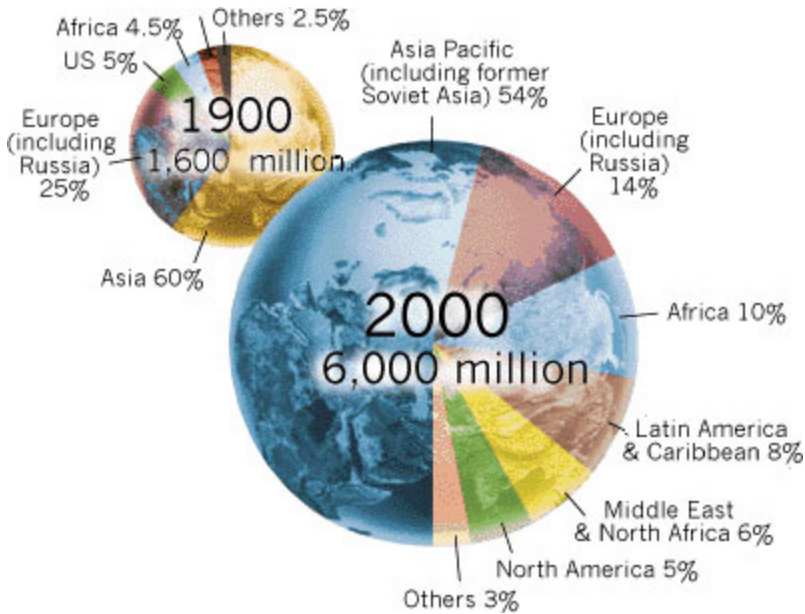
The truth about business

Don't be deceived by the suave looks, swagger and designer outfits: BUSINESS IS WAR and you must treat it as such. Those captains of industry you see are fighting for market share. They are fighting for market space. What are you fighting for? Food or business?

To drive this home a little bit, let me show you what is happening in the world.

Growth of World Population

In the year 1900, there were 1.6 billion people on this earth. The earth's size has not changed, it is still the same size, but in the year 2000 there were six billion people on this earth. In 2011, the number of people on earth stood at seven billion, yet the earth has not increased in size.



World population by region, 1900 and 2000

Source: <http://newint.org>

World Population/Ratio

Year	Population	Ratio Of Land Space Per Man
1804	1 Billion	1:1
1900	1.6 Billion	1: 2
1960	3 Billion	1: 3
1980	4.5 Billion	1: 5
1999	6 Billion	1: 6
2011	7 Billion	1: 7
2025	8 Billion	1: 8
2043	10 Billion	1: 10

What is happening in the world is that the ever increasing population is struggling to find a place on earth which has not increased in size to accommodate their number. With the introduction of the internet the ratio has changed to 1:7000. The job you're looking for? There are 7000 people looking for that same job. That one naira you are looking for? There are 7000 people looking for it.

Dear reader, if nothing I have said so far has touched you that should touch you. When my father died, the house rent for the 3-bedroom flat we lived in 1985 was N3000. By the time I got married and paid for a 3-bedroom flat in 2002, it was N600,000. I can only imagine what it will be like when my son wants to rent a house in another 10 years' time.

How Do You Start a Business?

I left paid employment for one reason: the salary I earned could not guarantee my children's school fees when they go into secondary school, as they were in primary school then. I was earning N350,000 and I had three kids in school. If my children were to enter secondary school, the fees would be one million naira. That's how much school fees are now in private schools. So if I was earning N350,000 and had one million naira school fees to pay, I would have to wait for three months to gather that kind of money. Otherwise my kids would have to suffer poor education in secondary school. That was the option that I had. So I decided that what I should do was to start a business.

How do you go about starting a business?

- 1. Register a company or business name:** In starting a business, I found out that people don't do business with you based on your name. I may not do business with Banke Badmus, but if she has a business called Bada International, I will do business with her. So the first thing you need to do is go and register a company or a business name with the Corporate Affairs Commission

(CAC). Nobody wants to trade with whatever your name is; they want to trade with an entity whether as a limited liability or a company name. My company registration cost me N60, 000 plus.

2. **Open a company bank account:** Whatever you want to get, you must prepare for it. Payments can be made through cheques or wire transfer so you need to open a bank account for your business. When you open an account you can always publish it in your invoices and you get paid.
3. **Register with the FIRS and State IRS:** To remain ethical, you must register with the Federal Inland Revenue Service and the State Inland Revenue Service. If you're hoping to have a big company you must have these in place already. Otherwise, the day tax people will enter your office you will find out that you owe large sums in taxes and you will run aground. This is because there are penal charges when you default.
4. **Get a secure email address and website running:** Create a website for your business. It's not expensive. You can also get somebody who is a friend and can do it for you. There are IT gurus even in University that will do it for you free of charge and then you pay to host the website.

My own website cost me about N30, 000 to host at that time. I started small but planned to grow big.

5. Start your office from anywhere: You can start your office by sharing office space with another business, renting your own office space, or you can even create personal office space at home. I didn't have an office so I told my wife to give me a part of the bedroom. She gave me a part of the bedroom and I set up a small space there. I put a table, a chair, a laptop and a 4-in-1 printer, and I was live!

My contacts on my phone were my first market. I did bulk SMS telling them look, I provide security services, for more information you can always get back to me. Some people got back to me and said "King, we want you to provide 2 guards here," "We want you to provide 4 guards here."

Somebody you know has your next N200, 000 waiting. Your family and friends are your first market. Your phone book, your Facebook, and your email address book are your first market. Sell to those people. That is how you raise your first business; through family and friends. You know somebody who knows somebody, who knows somebody who knows somebody.

6. **Get your business cards:** You must print business cards with your details: name, email address, phone number, etc. Then for instance if you are a tailor you can approach somebody with your business card and say “I like your shirt. Your tailor did well but I’m sure I can give him a run for his money. Try me.” The person may not be able to take a decision at that time, but maybe the next day, he might. He can then reach you because he has your business card.

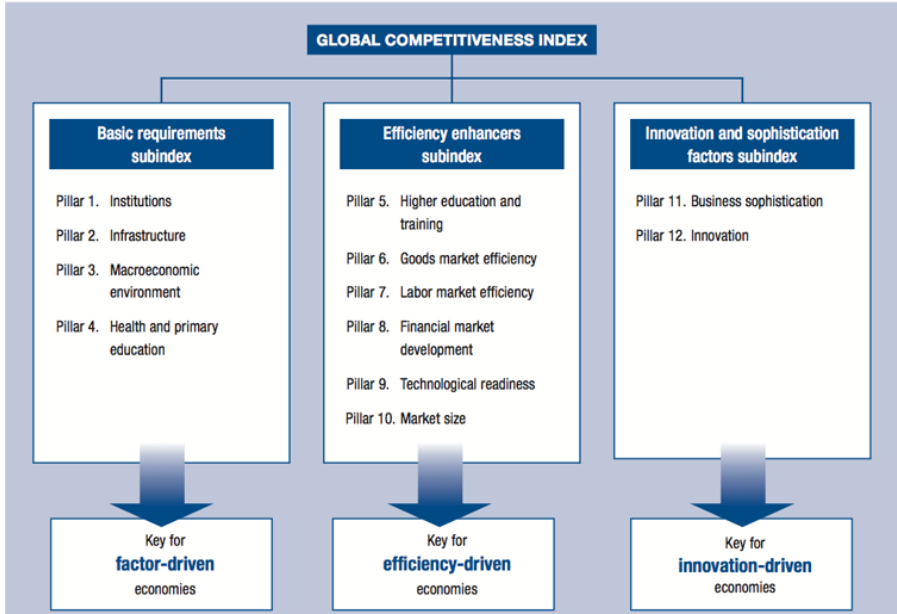
What Business Can I Do?

You only make money where there is a problem. If you don't see the problem, there's no opportunity. It's like somebody who comes to sell me cold water in the rainy season, or an umbrella when it's sunny. That is wrong marketing. Despite the fact that you supply the best umbrellas, your market during the dry season will be low. It will not make sense.

The Value of Research

Now, you need to invest your time in research. Let's take Nigeria for example.

There is a unit called the World Economic Forum. They check the competitive nature of a country. Take a look at the Global Competitiveness Index below:



Global Competitive Index – World Economic Forum

Source: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2014-2015/methodology/>

Nigeria - Global Competitive Index 2013-2014

The 12 Pillars are broken down into INDICATORS; find below each Pillar and their respective Indicators.

INSTITUTIONS

- Property rights
- Intellectual property protection
- Diversion of public funds
- Public trust in politicians
- Irregular payments and bribes
- Judicial independence
- Favoritism in decisions of government officials
- Wastefulness of government spending
- Burden of government regulation
- Efficiency of legal framework in settling disputes
- Efficiency of legal framework in challenging regs
- Transparency of government policymaking
- Gov't services for improved business performance
- Business costs of terrorism
- Business costs of crime and violence
- Organized crime
- Reliability of police services
- Ethical behavior of firms
- Strength of auditing and reporting standards
- Efficacy of corporate boards
- Protection of minority shareholders' interests
- Strength of investor protection, 0–10 (best)

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Quality of overall infrastructure
- Quality of roads
- Quality of railroad infrastructure
- Quality of port infrastructure
- Quality of air transport infrastructure
- Available airline seat kms/week, millions

- Quality of electricity supply
- Mobile telephone subscriptions/100 pop
- Fixed telephone lines/100 po

GOODS MARKET EFFICIENCY

- Intensity of local competition
- Extent of market dominance
- Effectiveness of anti-monopoly policy
- Extent and effect of taxation
- Total tax rate, % profits
- No procedures to start a business
- No days to start a business
- Agricultural policy costs
- Prevalence of trade barriers
- Trade tariffs, % duty
- Prevalence of foreign ownership
- Business impact of rules on FDI
- Burden of customs procedures
- Imports as a percentage of GDP
- Degree of customer orientation
- Buyer sophistication

HEALTH AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

- Business impact of malaria
- Malaria cases/100,000 pop
- Business impact of tuberculosis
- Tuberculosis cases/100,000 pop
- Business impact of HIV/AIDS
- HIV prevalence, % adult pop
- Infant mortality, deaths/1,000 live births
- Life expectancy, years
- Quality of primary education
- Primary education enrollment, net %

MACROECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

- Government budget balance, % GDP
- Gross national savings, % GDP
- Inflation, annual % change
- General government debt, % GDP
- Country credit rating, 0–100 (best)

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Secondary education enrollment, gross %
- Tertiary education enrollment, gross %
- Quality of the educational system
- Quality of math and science education
- Quality of management schools
- Internet access in schools
- Availability of research and training services
- Extent of staff training
- Labour

MARKET EFFICIENCY

- Cooperation in labor-employer relations
- Flexibility of wage determination
- Hiring and firing practices
- Redundancy costs, weeks of salary
- Pay and productivity
- Reliance on professional management
- Brain drain
- Women in labor force, ratio to men

MARKET SIZE

- Domestic market size index, 1–7 (best)
- Foreign market size index, 1–7 (best)

FINANCIAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- Availability of financial services
- Affordability of financial services
- Financing through local equity market

- Ease of access to loans
- Venture capital availability
- Soundness of banks
- Regulation of securities exchanges
- Legal rights index, 0–10 (best)

TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS

- Availability of latest technologies
- Firm-level technology absorption
- FDI and technology transfer
- Individuals using Internet, %
- Broadband Internet subscriptions/100 pop
- Int'l Internet bandwidth, kb/s per user*
- Mobile broadband subscriptions/100 pop

BUSINESS SOPHISTICATION

- Local supplier quantity
- Local supplier quality
- State of cluster development
- Nature of competitive advantage
- Value chain breadth
- Control of international distribution
- Production process sophistication
- Extent of marketing
- Willingness to delegate authority

INNOVATION

- Capacity for innovation
- Quality of scientific research institutions
- Company spending on R&D
- University-industry collaboration in R&D
- Gov't procurement of advanced tech products
- Availability of scientists and engineers
- PCT patents, applications/million pop

Each INDICATOR is measured on a scale of 1–7; the higher the better

For the basic requirements sub-index, even if there are no secondary schools, there should be electricity, good roads, healthcare, primary education, and communication. These are the basics, most of which Nigeria cannot even boast of.

The next level is the efficiency enhancers. This looks at things like the quality of graduates being churned out, not just the quantity. We know where Nigeria stands regarding this.

In Nigeria we are close to 200 million people, of which only 50 million are working. The ratio of workers to dependents is 3:1 in Nigeria, but unlike developed countries where there is enough work for you, here there's not enough.

The population of Dubai is 9.9 million people, but the indigenes are less than a million. You will never find any of these indigenes working as taxi drivers or fuel station attendants. They are all board members of companies. No foreigner can register a business in Dubai unless an indigene owns 51% of that business. That is what governance is; their citizens are protected. Here in Nigeria, you find people who graduated 18 years ago and don't even have a source of income.

Take a look at our Global Competitive Index Reports for 2013 and 2014 respectively:

Nigeria Global Competitive Index Report 2013 Vs 2014

Total Countries Assessed In 2014	148	144	Total Countries Assessed In 2013
Global Competitive Index 2014	120th 3.57	115th 3.67	Global Competitive Index 2013
Basic Requirement	136th 3.40	130th 3.52	Basic Requirement
Efficiency Enhancers	83rd 3.90	78th 3.96	Efficiency Enhancers
Innovation & Sophistication	82nd 3.44	73rd 3.53	Innovation & Sophistication

Now, compare that with the Global Competitive Index Reports for 2014 vs. 2015 respectively

Nigeria global competitive index report 2014 vs 2015

Total countries assessed in 2014	148	144	Total countries assessed in 2015
Global competitive index 2014	120th 3.57	127th	Global competitive index 2015
Basic requirement	136th 3.40	140th 3.2	Basic requirement
Efficiency enhancers	83rd 3.90	82nd 3.9	Efficiency enhancers
Innovation & sophistication	82nd 3.44	103rd 3.3	Innovation & sophistication

The summary of the GCI report is that our institutions are weak, as seen from the heavy corruption, insufficient property rights, and poor level of security. Our national security position dropped to 139 out of 144. Nigeria must improve its infrastructure – construction of transport systems, roads, power, and telecoms systems – as we are 134th. Quality of education must improve and primary healthcare must improve, as well the quality of primary education. We are also poor in giving loans-137th position.

However we have a large market size – 33rd, and a strong labour market -40th, both of which have served to attract major investors to Nigeria despite the challenges.

For instance, when MTN came into Nigeria, they looked at the Domestic Market Size Index.

Nigeria has 180 million people and that was what they looked at. They saw that insecurity was a problem: they said they would fix this for themselves, at a cost. They also saw our infrastructural challenges. There is nowhere outside this country where a company would build a BTS site and then place two generators there with diesel. It is only in Nigeria. MTN factored this as a cost also. So when they did all that, they sold each SIM card for N35,000. So even the price they had to pay for their license, they

were ready to pay because they knew that in two years they would make their money back. And they made their money back.

They looked at our Global Competitive Index Report; they read it. A Chinese man will look at it, see that our property rights are not strong and we are poor in our institutions. So what they will do is, if you release a film, say *30 Days in Atlanta*, they will take it, produce 10,000 copies of it, and give it to our boys for N80. Those ones will sell it for N150. So by the time you do 100,000 copies at a profit of N70 per copy, we're talking business here. And if you arrest the Chinese man, he knows that he can bribe his way out and the officer will turn against you.

It was the poor quality of our education that gave rise to private schools in Nigeria; our government was not responsive. In Brazil for instance, education is free up to secondary school level, and it is the same in many other countries. In Nigeria, if you want quality education for your child, you start paying school fees as soon as that child can say "ta ta". For innovation, we can't even mention Nigeria. We don't have time for innovation. We live a pay-as-you-go life.

You need to read a lot of material information for your business so as to know how to win. The fact that people have volume business does not necessarily mean they are profitable. The index is a summary of what an investor should look at. Anything above 100 on the GCI report, we are poor, anything between 60 and 100 is average, and anything between 1 and 60 we are good. Our low score in infrastructure means that starting a construction business is a good idea because a lot of building is still going on.

If you look at primary healthcare, we are the second to last. This means that if you open a hospital, you will make money. This is how a business man reasons and thinks.

Just looking at the chart above, you can see the magnitude of our security challenge. With information like this, I decided I was going to start a security business.

Global Competitiveness Index

	Rank (out of 144)	Score (1–7)
GCI 2014–2015	127	3.4
GCI 2013–2014 (out of 148).....	120.....	3.6
GCI 2012–2013 (out of 144).....	115.....	3.7
GCI 2011–2012 (out of 142).....	127	3.4
Basic requirements (60.0%)	140	3.2
Institutions	129.....	3.0
Infrastructure	134.....	2.1
Macroeconomic environment	76.....	4.6
Health and primary education.....	143.....	3.0
Efficiency enhancers (35.0%)	82	3.9
Higher education and training.....	124.....	2.9
Goods market efficiency	87	4.2
Labor market efficiency	40.....	4.5
Financial market development	67	4.1
Technological readiness.....	104.....	3.0
Market size.....	33.....	4.7
Innovation and sophistication factors (5.0%)	103	3.3
Business sophistication	87	3.8
Innovation.....	114.....	2.8

If you want to do business and you don't understand the economy, it is a problem because from the competitive analysis you find out the major problems of Nigeria.

Let us look at some of the challenges entrepreneurs in Nigeria have to deal with:

The most problematic factors for doing business in nigeria	
Inefficient Government Bureaucracy	Poor work ethic in national labour force
Inadequate Educated Workforce	Poor Public Health
Inadequate Supply of Infrastructure	Policy Instability
Corruption	Restrictive labour Regulations
Access to Financing	Inflation
Tax Regulations	Crime and Theft
Tax Rates	Foreign Currency Regulations
Insufficient Capacity to Innovate	Government Instability/ Coups

(As reported by WEF from the GCI report)

Inefficient government bureaucracy often poses problems for entrepreneurs. For instance, you may be told that in order for you to be in that business you must get a license in this, that and that.

For example, my company is on the NIPEX board. If your company does business with the oil and gas sector, you must have NIPEX approval. I had done it, but needed

to revalidate it. They asked how I supply food to my staff offshore. I said I have a chandler to do it. They said I needed to get a license for that. I asked how to go about getting it, and they said I needed to go to the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA). The Nigerian Ports Authority then told me that I needed to get clearance from Customs, and when I got to Customs they said it would take almost 3 months, and cost me some millions to complete the process. Now how do you expect me to do business at that level?

It becomes difficult for new entrants, who are already dealing with the challenge of inadequate supply of well educated workers to run their businesses.

Inadequate supply of infrastructure is also another challenge. You want to open a hotel. Maybe your father has given you property and you've cleaned up the house and say it's a hotel. The first day that clients come into your building, they find a beautiful bed, beautiful arrangement, everything is done well. Then the electricity goes off thanks to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), and because you have a commitment to providing service, you run your generator for 72 hours.

Corruption is also on that list. You can wake up today and find that the laws have been changed without warning

to suit a selfish few. For example, in order for me to register my business as a security provider, I had to get a license from the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. It cost N100, 000 to buy the application form. The PHS- the book which the SSS would investigate- was N5000 per director so if you had 4 directors, that would be N20,000. After the SSS does their investigation, you pay about N200,000 for the license. By the time we got there they said they had cancelled the appointment. After a while, we were told that the form would now cost N500,000 and documentation of each director would now cost N100,000. After paying all of this, the SSS would require you to bring all your directors to Yellow House in Abuja for finger printing and biometrics. By this time you've spent even more money paying for flight, accommodation, and you go back to wait for them to finish verification. When they're done you're told that the license costs N800, 000, and you're given a receipt for that amount. You go through all this before you start business. The price of the license recently went up to N2.5 million. How can new entrants cope with this? This is a challenge when it comes to doing business in Nigeria, yet you have not started making any money.

Think Speed, Not Size

Another truth you must know about business is that it is not the big that swallows the small, but the fast that swallows the slow.

Growing up, all I knew about milk was Peak milk. I'm certain that right now in your industry, there are some companies that are dominant. Cowbell came into the same market that Peak was dominating, and they checked the indices. After considering the price of a tin of milk at the time- N30/N40- and the fact that everybody needs milk, they decided not to go after the rich or even the middle class, but to make the lower class their target market. Their branding and advertising was geared towards winning the lower class. They packaged their powdered milk in little N5 sachets and sold to the poor in different remote areas. They were dealing in volume business, and eventually Peak was also forced to package milk in sachets so as to compete with Cowbell who was taking their market share.

Success is not a function of your size. It is a function of your speed. How fast can you penetrate your market and take your share? What is your penetration strategy? When Cowbell entered their market, they went for the lower

class that, because of their size, had more money to offer. They knew that even less privileged school children would want to add milk, even if only a little, to their pap, and the N5 sachet would attract them. They entered the market so much so that there is no state today where you won't find Cowbell. They used a strategy called competitive intelligence.

What is Competitive Intelligence?

“Competitive intelligence is a systematic and ethical program for gathering, analyzing, and managing external information that can affect your company’s plans, decisions or operations.”

To be successful in business, you must not only get information but also make full proof of it; you must work it. Most of the information you need is in the public domain; you need to gather it via research, then sit down and determine what works for your business and what doesn’t.

Competitive intelligence requires that business decisions be made not on instinct, intuition, or sentiment, but on information gathered and analyzed. When you gather this data, you can now analyze and organize what is relevant to you, to suit your purposes; then you are armed with intelligence.

Case in point: When I was building my house in Lagos, I wanted stones on the walls, not paint. One day, a young man met my architect and said he could get the stones. We agreed, and he bought the stones from Ibadan, got labour to break them, and fixed them on the walls. Half of my

entire building wears those stones, for which I paid some serious millions. This young man has worked on many other houses, and even bought himself a car.

When you are able to get data and sift it, it becomes information which can translate to intelligence.

As a fish farmer or seller, who will eat your fish? Who will buy it? There are many people in the fish business, so the ability to list specific clients- hotels, fast food joints, etc- becomes information. When you find out that Mr. Biggs buys from a particular source at N30, and you can sell for N25, information becomes intelligence.

There are over 10,000 security companies in Nigeria – over 1000 in Ibadan alone, and about 3000-4000 in Lagos. I had a hard time finding my company's name on the list as I scanned it, because it was too long! We're all doing the same thing, but what did I do to get an edge? I said, "If I'm going to do security, I need to do something to make a mark." So I asked myself, "Where is the money in Nigeria?" I learnt that 95% of the money is in the oil and gas market, and that 85% of Nigeria's budget comes from the oil and gas industry. So I decided I had no business with the other 5%; I focused on security in the oil and gas industry. In oil and gas, they don't owe; they prepare their

budget. They have kept their money aside already. So I asked myself, what kind of security can I provide in oil and gas? I did my research and found out that they do offshore security, and they do land security. The land security is for boys, but the offshore is for men.

I researched further. What kind of security is needed? I learnt that they needed guards, armed and unarmed. I went online to read up on offshore security apparatus, and then I created a LinkedIn account, put up my profile and registered as a member of the Maritime Securities group. I saw conversations about the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea; I did not know what these meant but I sat down and began to read each person's comment. I did not stop reading until I had read every single comment. I decided that if this is where the money was, I was ready to enter or die trying.

Whenever I saw a reference to Nigeria, I would chip in something. The more they saw my name, the more my presence was established. They knew that Ubong from Akwa-Ibom was a Nigerian. When they needed assistance in Africa, they chose me because of the notion that Africa is one big place. They asked me, "Please can you help us solve a problem in Kenya?" I did not know where to begin;

Kenya and Kaduna are not the same. I had made a habit of connecting with people not for gist but for opportunities, so I recommended someone I had connected with, from Kenya. I told my contact about the opportunity, which was to provide security escort for an optic fibre laying operation underwater for 15 days. They said we would need to provide the armed security. The Kenyan said he would charge 150,000 dollars. I contacted the guys in Seychelles who wanted to do it, and they asked if I trusted the guy. I said I did, so they wired the money to him (I took a risk).

As I was driving two days later, my Kenyan friend sent me a text. “King, I have received the sum of \$150,000. Please send me your account number, let me send you your 10% for the deal.” It was then that I picked up my calculator to find out how much \$150, 000 was in naira. When I saw the figure –N22,500, 000 – that passed over my head in 24 hours, I declared that this was the business I would go into. As if that was not enough, the guys who initiated the deal said, “We need to pay you 5% of the total deal for helping us make the connection we needed.” I calculated my profit and then calculated my cost of operation (N1500 mobile phone credit). I was blown away.

Who are you talking to? Are you spending all your airtime on romance or unfruitful communication? I used N1500 to make N9.97 million. What are you doing with your phone credit? Call the right person. Talk to the right people, because who you talk to determines where you will end up. That's how I decided I would spend time reading about maritime security and it has paid off.

We established earlier that business is war. Competitive Intelligence has its origin with a man called Sun Tzu. He wrote the book, *The Art of War*. If you're an entrepreneur you need to read that book. It tells the story of how a young Chinese general with a small army defeated a big army using some principles.

The principles that won him these victories were chronicled, and later put to use by the government, military people, and eventually professionals in the corporate world. Currently there is a group known as the Competitive Intelligence and Strategic Decision-Making Committee.

Competitive intelligence helps you to get market insight and analysis, which you will now turn to strategy. Based on this, you can develop an action plan to grow your business.

Why is Competitive Intelligence Important?

Competitive Intelligence is important because it allows companies to meet their intelligence needs in these three functional categories:

- **Strategic decisions and actions**, including the development of strategic plans and strategies, knowledge of the economy, global competition, shorter product life cycle as well as increasing OPPORTUNITIES and RISKS for enterprises.
- **Early warning topics**, including competitor initiatives, technological surprise, and governmental actions.
- **Descriptions of the key players** in the specific marketplace, including competitors, customers, suppliers, regulators, and potential partners.

Competitive Intelligence helps you to:

Know your area of operation: Closely monitor the competition; keep up with competitors' announcements, regulatory changes and political and social pressures impacting the industry.

Detect competitive threats: When you know what threats you are facing, you are able to prepare.

Eliminate or lessen surprises: Few things, if any, take you unawares, because you are on top of things in your area of operation. How will the change of government affect your business? What is the budget of your state? Competitive intelligence equips you.

Enhance competitive advantage by lessening reaction time: It gives you early warning signs so that you can take strategic decisions and actions that will place you ahead of others. It helps you know who the key players are. I read up on all the oil and gas companies, and I read about my competitors in my area of business. If you're going to be entering a place, you must know your opposition. Use the best as your benchmark, not the mediocre. Stop competing with the locals, aim for the international standards. Define your standards against the best. Study their strategy and learn what you can from them.

Find new opportunities: Where you start is not important; where you will end is what's important. When I decided on the business I was going to do, I started gathering intelligence. I found groups related to my profession on LinkedIn and became more active. The more I networked, the more it registered in everybody's minds, "We have a boy in Nigeria who we can relate with."

Planning with Competitive Intelligence

The key areas you should pay attention to include:

- Market
- Products
- Industry
- Competitors
- Vendors
- Customers

Sources of Information

- **Public domain information:**
 - Newspapers, journals
 - Radio, television
 - Internet, information databases
 - Company publications
 - Trade shows
 - Official publications by government authorities
- **Reports and statistics**
- **Intellectual property documents**

Competitive Intelligence Analysis Cycle



- Define the question
- Gather & organize data
- Synthesize/relate & filter the data
- Analyze appropriate data
- Prepare findings & draw insights
- Prepare recommendations
- Draft, review, approve, and issue report
- Follow-up –update the process

What Competitive Intelligence IS and IS NOT

Competitive Intelligence IS	Competitive Intelligence IS NOT
CI is information that has been analyzed to the point where a decision can be taken	CI is not spying – Spying involves illegal and unethical activities and it attracts legal actions
CI is a tool to alert management of early warning of both threats and opportunities	CI is not a crystal ball – there is no such thing as a true forecasting tool
CI is a tool to deliver reasonable assessment – Gives you best view of market and the competition (not peeping into competition’s financial records)	CI is not database search – database is just data
CI is a way for companies to increase their bottom line	CI is not paper – paper is the death of good intelligence
CI is directed from the Executive Suite- The motivation and direction come from the CEO -plus budget & personnel	CI is not a software – Software does not on itself yield intelligence. People need to make sense of all collected information.

(source: competitive global index)

Developing Strategies

Strategies come as a result of you putting down your thoughts and action points. Where do you enter through, and how? You can use Competitive Intelligence to your advantage with the following tools:

Needs
Assessment

- Key Intelligence questions

Data
Collection

- Publicly available data
- Intellectual property data

Analysis
of data

- Industry
- Competitors

Delivering
intelligence

- Report
- Action

What Strategy Should a Company Adopt?

If you've been doing business for ten years and it has not grown, your strategy must change. A few tips for deciding on strategy are:

1. You should be unique, different from the rest in your industry
2. Focus on your niche
3. Understand strategies adopted by your competitors in the market
4. Keep in mind that you must remain competitive, and determine strategy accordingly

The formula for a successful product in the market is simple:

Innovation + Brand + Design = Success

Before You Go

Life hits us from many sides and we have the option of giving up or fighting back. Fighting back requires skill, and understanding the challenge one is facing is a good position to be in. With this knowledge, one can chart a way towards a desired objective/s with the approved resources and structure. In business, nothing beats doing it well the first time and at the right time. An old adage says “know the tricks of the trade” but it is more important to know and understand the trade, before you know the tricks of the trade.

You can start a business from anywhere and grow it to any height. It is also important to pay attention to the approved government structure and regulations to do your business. Get to know what the market wants and where they want it. Resourcefulness and timing are very important tools in penetrating your market; like it is said, it is not the big that swallows the small but the fast that swallows the slow. Speed is important but it must go with quality. Never compromise your quality.

In identifying your market, the competitive intelligence concept will help you get the required information to make

quality decisions about your market. The accumulated data, translated to intelligence, is what separates winners from losers. You will win by intelligence.

See you at the top.

Many startups and active businesses fail because of the lack of application of the basic strategies to survive and win. In as much as the popular Japanese saying opines that, "the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step," it is important to know in what direction to take that first step, and how to take steps to make it through that journey. Any market you decide to be active in, the steps are all the same, but understanding those steps is what many have failed to get. **PENETRATING YOUR MARKET** will help you navigate those steps, if you apply the principles in this book. Go for it! Go for your market!

"...you carry something inside of you that needs to be sold and marketed. You need to **PENETRATE YOUR MARKET.**"

"**IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE FOR A MAN NOT TO MAKE A PLAN FOR HIS FAMILY WHETHER HE'S ALIVE OR DEAD.**"

About the Author

Ubong Thompson King is the Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Protection Plus Services Limited (PPSL), a corporate security company whose headquarters is in Sangotedo, Lekki-Epe express way, Lagos state, Nigeria.

He has operated in the security industry for 21 years and has been able to grow a company, which started in a corner of his bedroom, from zero to hundreds of people spread in 6 countries. A graduate of the University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State, Nigeria with a BSc. Ed in Agriculture, Ubong's intense dislike of seeing people lose their possessions, formed part of the drive that made him decide to build a career in the security industry.

He has worked with: Pahek Security Service Limited, where he began to build his career in the security industry, Alarm Centre Limited, Halogen Security Company Ltd, and XL Security & Protection Services Limited. His consistency paid off and today, he consults for diplomatic communities in Nigeria, and some Government agencies in Nigeria and beyond. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Lagos Business School, where he graduated from the Executive Management program (MSMP 47) and was elected class president of MSMP 47, and is a member of the Governing Council of the school. His professional certification include: PFSO (Port Facility Security Officer), SSO (Ship Security Officer), and CSO (Company Security Officer), from the United Kingdom. He is a member of several professional bodies which include, the Nigeria -Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Commerce of which he is a board member, Nigeria- South Africa Chamber of Commerce, Nigeria -China Business Council, Nigeria- German Business Association and is the current Chairman of the American Society for industrial Security (ASIS), Chapter 206, Nigeria.

Ubong is called the Apostle of the Market Place. He believes that God is his senior partner in the business arena, and is a most prolific speaker, who has spoken at business and church platforms. As Group Managing Director of PPSL, he is deeply passionate about the industry he operates in, and has a relentless commitment to raise the standards while creating better values in his industry, and developing human capital in his country of birth, Nigeria.

Ubong King is passionately committed to his family and is married to his wife of 13 years, Amb. (Mrs.) Unyime -Ivy King, who is a co-builder with him in the home and in business. They are blessed with 4 children: Adora-Edima, Jamon-Mfonabasi, Atara-Uyaiabasi and Sarah-Mbuotidem.

