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## NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA - A CASE STUDY OF COMPASS NEWSPAPER

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explored certain problems of newspaper management that confront newspaper in Nigeria and particularly Compass Newspaper. This paper particularly analysed the characteristics of the newspapers as it relate to departments, structures and base and problems associated with some of them. Different levels of management problems and types base on human or material and also internal and external challenges. Based on that, this paper argued that the type and level of management problems hinders the growth and development of newspapers in the country. The process of founding, managing and sustaining newspaper from the initial 'new-to-the-market' status, to competing with the already known and acceptable ones and other newcomers pose a serious challenge to the industry. According to some scholars, the main constraint on the process of building of core capabilities for the most innovative firms, including newspaper companies, is located at the level of the organization. In contrast, the main conclusion of this paper is that newspaper companies that are building up their first core capabilities still have problems related to lack of knowledge of management workings. This sets up specific issues for knowledge management in newspaper firms. This research is based on a detailed case study about the major management problems associated with, but not limited to, Nigerian newspapers.*

**Keywords:** *Newspaper Management, Print and Digital Media, Publishing Problems*

### INTRODUCTION

In trying to trace the origin of newspapering, Steinberg (1970) claims that Johannes Guttenberg was the first to print the movable type- a technological breakthrough that made possible an extraordinary communication revolution in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. But Fox (1978) counters this assertion. He contends that the Chinese were printing books as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, adding that the oldest book in existence was Buddhist manuscript of 868 A.D. However, Aliagan (2005) posited that the Romans had the first wall newspaper, *Acta Diurna*, printed from wood blocks.

The term newspaper became common in the 17th century. However, in Germany, publications that we would today consider to be newspaper publications were appearing as early as the 16th century. They were discernibly newspapers for the following reasons: they were printed, dated, appeared at regular and frequent publication intervals, and included a variety of news items (unlike single item news mentioned above). The first newspaper however was said to be the *Strasbourg Relation*, in the early 17th century. German

newspapers, like *avisis*, were organized by the location from which they came, and by date. They differed from *avisis* in the following manners: they employed a distinct and highly illustrated title page, and they applied an overall date to each issue.

The German-language *Relation aller Furnemmen und gedenckwiirdigen Historien*, printed from 1605 onwards by Johann Carolus in Strasbourg, is often recognized as the first newspaper. [6] [7] At the time, Strasbourg was a free imperial city in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation; the first newspaper of modern Germany was the *Avisa*, published in 1609 in Wolfenbiittel.

Other early papers include the Dutch *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* of 1618 was the first to appear in folio- rather than quarto-size. Amsterdam, a center of world trade, quickly became home to newspapers in many languages, often before they were published in their own country.

The first English-language newspaper, *Corrant out of Italy, Germany, etc.*, was published in Amsterdam in 1620. A year and a half later, *Corante, or weekly news from Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, France and the Low Countries* was published in England by an "N.B." (generally thought to be either Nathaniel Butter or Nicholas Bourne) and Thomas Archer.

The first newspaper in France was published in 1631, *La Gazette* (originally published as *Gazette de France*). The first newspaper in Portugal, *A Gazeta da Restauracao*, was published in 1641 in Lisbon. The first Spanish newspaper, *Gaceta de Madrid*, was published in 1661. *Post-och Inrikes Tidningar* (founded as *Ordinari Post Tijdender*) was first published in Sweden in 1645, and is the oldest newspaper still in existence, though it now publishes solely online. *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant* from Haarlem, first published in 1656, is the oldest paper still printed. It was forced to merge with the newspaper *Haarlems Dagblad* in 1942 when Germany occupied the Netherlands. Since then the *Haarlems Dagblad* appears with the subtitle *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant 1656* and considers itself to be the oldest newspaper still publishing. *Merkuriusz Polski Ordynaryjny* was published in Krakow, Poland in 1661. The first successful English daily, *The Daily Courant*, was published from 1702 to 1735.

The arrival of the Europeans in Africa in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century was believed to be the herald of print journals. Aliagan (2005:14) opined that:

*"Modern journalism came to Africa with the arrival of the Europeans. Colonialism bestowed an unintended blessing on Africa through the dissemination of information for effective governing of the colonies. The subsequent oppressive rule of the colonialists led to the emergence of nationalists who acted as the megaphone of African discontent. Ironically, their major tool of liberation struggle was the newspaper."*

The first African press came up in the British West Africa in 1857. *West African Herald* was the first African newspaper and was rolled out from the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. Akinfeleye (2011) posited that the Nigerian press is 55years older than the amalgamated Nigeria (1914) and it is 101 years older than the independent Nigeria (1960). It has been there at every milestone in Nigeria's march towards independence; during the post-independent era, especially at the critical time of unification and sustenance of the nation

during and after the civil war, (July 1967 - January, 1970); and during the different transitional periods from military rule to civilian (1966-1999).

The historical background and development of the Nigerian Press commenced with the printing media on 3rd December 1859 by a Christian Missionary named Reverend Henry Townsend who established the first Newspaper in Nigeria called "Iwe Iroyin fun awon Egba ati Yoruba" which literarily means "A newspaper for the Egba and Yoruba Nations" in today's Abeokuta the Capital city of Ogun State to promote literacy and build up elites among the then EGBAs and not with current serving political motive but as a matter of fact succeeding Newspapers choose contrary with an indelible footprint as far as political history of Nigeria is concerned. It was initially only published in local language (Yoruba) but its English supplement was added in 1860. The demise of 'Iwe Iroyin' later resulted to the emergence of other Newspapers like Anglo-African, Lagos Time and Gold Coast Advertiser, Lagos Observer, The Eagle and Lagos Critic, The Mirror, The Nigerian Chronicle etc.

Akinfeleye (1980) notes that there is confusion as to the origin of the Nigerian press before and after colonization of the country. Referring to a joint study by Opubor, Akinfeleye and Sobowale (1979) on the state of the mass media in Africa, Akinfeleye contends that the researchers discovered a "dismal lack of information in almost all fields of human endeavours in Africa".

News was frequently highly selective. Rulers would often use them as ways to publish accounts of battles or events that made those rulers look good to the public. Sensationalist material was also printed, such as accounts of magic or of natural disasters; this material did not pose a threat to the state, because it did not pose criticism of the state. Printers readily printed sensationalist material because they faced a ready market, which proved lucrative for them. Printers found there was a market for news about rulers that did not cast those rulers in a favorable light. Printers could get away with doing so, because they would print the publication overnight and sell it quickly. This quick publication pace also resulted in quick returns on investments for printers.

#### **Private Uses of Early News Publications**

Rulers and merchants both established networks of people who were employed to provide them news from other lands, and here is an early manifestation of correspondence in news writing.

This paper discussed some problems faced by newspapers in Nigeria as it concerns management. This is a barely explored area as it serves as the basis on which decisions can be based to forestall committing similar mistakes. They are challenges faced by management of newspapers almost in every clime because of the universality of the medium of communication. The ill management of the material and human resources in many of the newspapers make it extremely difficult sometimes for the paper to compete favourably with peers.

The sailing of Nigeria ship in politics from Colonial era have been in conjunction with some people who can be described as the Nation builder because of the role they have played in Nigeria political development among whom is the Press who make good use of their institution to contribute immensely to development of Nigeria despite the fact that the political arena is unfriendly to them. The Press which is the bone of contention here makes judicious use of the institution to enhance nationalist struggle which later extend to

different dispensation that we have been as well as different military era and currently democratic dispensation of ours which as a matter of fact; not a child's play. Men of the press were humiliated and victimized which even worst during military era with slighted differentiation during civilian era. Despite the above, the institution and its men were determined, as a result of which they faced the different challenges created by the political arena which make them to deserve our kudos. It is undisputable fact that given kudos to men of the press and the institution at large does not mean that 100% success were recorded by them because of the imperfect nature that is peculiar to human being coupled with the presence of some shaft among them but determined members among them make it necessary. In lieu of the above, this paper beck to examine holistically with respect to all forms of government operated in this Country in relation to the performance of her constitutional role. The paper will also attempt to analyze the myriad of problems and challenges confronting the Nigerian Press and finally recommend a way forward toward achieving an independent Nigerian Press.

Meanwhile, managing newspaper, any other business, is usually left with the management staff of such newspapers that in turn coordinate the activities of other staff to ensure that the objectives, aspirations and goals of the founder(s) are realized. Failure to get it right from the management cadre will ultimately tell on the company. This takes us to the question "What is management"? Firstly; a manager's job consists of many planned and unplanned activities filled with communications with many people. Often, many of these people are outside the organization. Secondly; in addition to this wealth of intersection with others, a manager also has to solve a variety of problems by making many decisions. Often, these decisions must be made quickly by examining a situation and recognizing the possible outcomes of alternative solutions. Thirdly; management brings about improvement in organizations by setting goals and then integrating human, materials, and information resources toward the accomplishment of these goals as stated earlier.

Meanwhile, media mortality in Nigeria is very high considering the fact that many of the surviving newspapers now were established less than 30 years ago. The ones that were founded around independence have died. Tador (1996:40) however classifies the development of the Nigerian media into three phases as follows: The early press (1800-1920); Nationalist press (1929-1960); and contemporary press (1960-till date). In the opinion of Ogunsiji (1989), the history of the Nigerian media can be classified into four eras. These are the era of Missionary journalism (1846-1863), the era of alien-dominated press (1863-1914), the emergence of indigenous press (1914-1960) and the new era (1960-till date). None that was established in the pre independence ear has survived while even the post-independence era ones have only the Tribune is still being stocked on the newsstands. This makes it very clear the mortality rate of newspaper in Nigeria. With over 114 newspapers through these phases, only a few, and most of these, are recent publications.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study is to critically explore basic problems facing newspaper establishment in Nigeria which could be generic or peculiar.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are basically two; what are the management problems militating against development of newspaper companies in Nigeria and what has the Compass Newspaper been doing to overcome these challenges?

**Significance/Contribution of the Study**

This study has the capacity to help Nigeria's daily national newspapers to refocus and redesign its policies as it concern management at different levels so as to entrench structures that recognize that as much as a newspaper serves social responsibility functions, it is also a business entity to be run as such. This is informed by the fact that the print media industry has not entirely done well in the area of management which reverberates in the rate dailies come and go. Speculations in the media seem to suggest that socio-cultural cum political partisanship in the body polity has crept into the media industry and the members of boards of most Nigerian newspapers are political prostitutes. Appointments to such boards are no longer made on merit or statesmanship but on socio-ethnic and political patronage. The ownership/publisher influence on editorial content and the dearth of good reporters also contribute to these problems. The real media professionals are not completely allowed to do the press business. The consequence of this unhealthy situation is that the publishers (who are mostly non-media persons) call the tunes because they believe they are paying the piper. This study, therefore, found out that ownership of these newspapers contribute immensely to most of the problems. In fact, most problems emanated from ownership and founding philosophy and principles.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Eni (2012) posited that at every stage of the production process, different challenges or problems are encountered. She also highlighted some of the management and departmental problems that modern newspaper houses face to vary from deadline to meet, high cost of production, readership decline, slow production process, uncoordinated management structures and emergencies.

Waldrop (1955) also comments further that the average newspaper reader today is terribly short on time. The editorial writer can save time for him, and keep him well informed. He can do for readers what so few have a chance to do for themselves-research the background of news events, bring facts into focus, weigh the value of news in the scales of sound judgment. That is exactly what intelligent readers' want done for them today. This poses challenge to have the best writers so as not to lose readers who look out for good and well written reports. The Rochester *Times-Union*, in a 1951 two-column editorial, explains that in this complex age, a newspaper's service to its readers cannot end with the collection of facts. The facts are often so misleading as to be false when taken alone, and issues presented by the bare facts are often so complex that they require extensive examination to find their real meaning".

Speaking before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1948, Roscoe Drummond, then Washington correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, said the news of the world, even in the best newspapers, has so much challenges that editors sometimes marvel at how it survived.

According to a Pew Research Centre report that looked at 38 newspapers, both large and small, some are seeing massive declines in revenue while others are seeing dramatic increases. One of the main reasons for this discrepancy, the report suggested, are cultural differences within newspapers. Culture therefore forms part of the problems of newspaper management. Nwachukwu (1988:2) opined that whenever people work together, there is generally a need for coordination of efforts in order to attain expected results in reasonable time and with minimum amount of money, discomfort or energy.

Experts in the nation's media and marketing communication industries at a forum organized by the Advertising Agencies' Association of Nigeria, (AAAN), in 2010 In Lagos, raised alarm on the future of newspaper in Nigeria. Majority of them concluded that unless the print media braced up to the challenges posed by the new media, which was identified as a threat, it might go extinct in the nearest future. This apprehension was no doubt a fall-out of the report which portrayed an alarming slide in the patronage of newspaper. Ekeng (2010) posited that according to a study carried out by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) across the country, the daily sales figure of all the newspapers was less than 300,000, meaning that only one in every 470 Nigerians buy newspapers daily. Putting this reality in proper perspective, Popoola (2010) said that all the newspapers in Nigeria today have combined circulation figure that is far less than 500,000 copies per day of Daily Times of Nigeria in 1980 when the population of Nigeria was about half of what it is today. Presently the stockpile of unsold copies of newspapers and magazines in the circulation departments of most print media organizations is a vivid sign of this challenge.

Ekeng (2010) further disclosed that The Punch as the number one selling national daily only circulates 34, 264 copies, The Sun was ranked third with 25, 632 unit sales. Vanguard got 25, 241, while Guardian and ThisDay came 5th and 6th respectively, with 25, 222 and 21, 703 daily sales. Daily Trust, the most popular newspaper up North has 11, 672 daily unit sales. Tribune, the oldest surviving newspaper in Nigeria, was another surprise, managing only 8, 314 daily sales. The above mentioned dailies constitute what is known as the top 8 in the standing. The others combined, including Compass, Daily Independent, Leadership, National Life, New Nigeria, Mirror and Westerner, could barely rake up 1,600 daily sales.

Good management ensures that resources are not wasted, set goals are achieved and professionalism is adhered to in realization of organizational objectives. Management is the engine that powers an establishment.

Nwabueze (2011) mentioned management as what entails the achieving of goals with effective use of available resources. It is the process of directing, controlling and monitoring material and human resources available to an organization in order to achieve set goals. The term 'management' is also used to refer to the people who are involved in taking decisions that affect utilization of an organization's resources. Also, in explaining management, Akpala (1990:3) wrote that:

*"...the process of combining and utilizing or of allocating an organization's inputs (men, material and money) by planning, organizing, directing and controlling for the purpose of producing outputs (goods and services or whatever the objects are) desired by customers so that the organizational objectives are accomplished. "*

Nwachukwu (1988) added that guiding and supervising people including coordination of their activities towards achieving optimum results using organizational resources is management. Also, ensuring that people are guided effectively to get results is a critical function of management. Nwabueze (2011) opined that the basic functions of management include planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Some others like staffing, delegation of duties, decision making, monitoring etc. are extensions of the basic core functions. Planning entails the determination of future activities or actions, converting those actions into goals and deciding how the goals are achieved. Organizing entails the determination of the tools and resources that are necessary to accomplish specific tasks, harnessing and



coordinating those tools and resources such that set goals are achieved. Directing as a basic role of management is a communication based function. It is the usage of effective communication techniques to motivate and ginger employees towards achieving organizational goals. Ensuring that things work out the way they are planned is the controlling function of management.

A newspaper is a business like other businesses and there are ways to achieve set goals. Nwabueze (2011) posited that management is the livewire of any establishment. But in a developing environment such as Nigeria, managers require extra training and motivation which could be as a result of the type of society. In developed countries like America and United Kingdom for example, the sophistication of the technologies that are inherent make all members of the society have access to modern trends in all issues. As sophisticated as these managers may seem to be, they will find their readers in equal measure and this will continue to push them in their quest for further managerial development. Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro (2012) explained that in a fast paced world where information can be found with the click of a button, newspapers are finding it hard to compete. Since the early 1990s the image of a new revolution has been haunting us. Variously called the Information Revolution or the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, it assumes a classic shift in production processes and relations, the emergence of a new knowledge-based economy, and a quantum leap from an industrial society into an information society. Also, the Internet, a major force behind information technology, is argued by Song, Shao and Wu (2010) to represent the most significant change in the media market during the past decades. The Internet is becoming the dominant force in the information world, transforming the ways in which information is aggregated, stored, searched, and retrieved. In addition, Campbell, Martin, and Fabos (2009) noted that the Internet is facilitating the convergence of media forms, —the process whereby old and new media are available via the integration of personal computers and high-speed satellite based phone or cable links!.

Meyer (2009) argued that a newspaper can beat the Internet in portability. —You can read it in the bathroom, at the breakfast table, in the back yard, or on the bus. But computers are getting smaller and more portable and are no longer in need of being hard-wired to the Internet. They can even hide in your mobile phone, turning it into a multiple use device for e-mail, Internet browsing, and GPS navigation. These developments tend to leave very little for a newspaper to do. Virtually all Nigerian newspapers have been adapting themselves to this new media age. The traditional medium for publishing content is paper, and now newspapers have tried certain new medium such as online newspaper edition and mobile phone newspapers. As at today, 60 Nigerian newspapers are online, [www.onlinenewspapers.com/nigeria](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/nigeria), while some operate mobile phone news service, such as Mobile Nation ([www.thenationmobile.net](http://www.thenationmobile.net)), Mobile Punch (<http://mobile.punchng.com/default.aspx>), and Vanguard Mobile (<http://rn.vanguardngr.com>).

Dwindling newspaper readership is a big problem facing newspaper companies in Nigeria. Meyer (2009), Amodu (2007) and Murdoch (2005) in their respective studies found out that Internet is the major cause of dwindling newspaper readership. Abdulraheem et al (2012) study however went further to bring out the reason which is access to multitude of other online newspapers local, national and international.

Ajibade (2013) opined that defective curriculum is a major problem affecting newspaper management in Nigeria as many newspaper managers only trained as journalists without properly or adequately complimenting this training with management courses that would have made them complete managers. He argued that had these journalists have added management training to their reporting and editing coursework, they would have been able to surmount many of the problems confronting the development of the newspaper industry. Anaeto, Anaeto and Tejumaiye (2009) argues that contemporary newspaper and magazine have become indispensable in the present time because of strategic role they play in the social development and that despite this enviable role they play they are faced with many challenges. Some of the challenges highlighted include circulation and distribution, financial constraints, lack of feasibility study, high cost of production, poor power supply, repressive press laws and poor economy.

Eni (2012) posited that stale technology is a big factor affecting print media houses in Nigeria. He claimed that many media outfits would not be able to compete favourably because the industry is fast becoming one that allows only the very wealthy. Very few, apart from the politicians and moneybags, can afford to meet up with the current trend in machineries and equipment. He also reiterated the role of qualified service engineers and technicians who are in very short supply and many of these outfits may not be able to afford the cost of permanently engaging them so these engineers are consultants to many companies and as a result it will take time before issues with the machines are resolved thereby stalling production at such times. Media companies are also faced with spending extra cost on some activities and issues that ordinarily should not attract further cost. For instance, brand awareness, monitoring of vendors and circulation and some reward activities to agents and vendors due to some threat of sabotage.

Environment of operation is also a major problem affecting newspaper management in Nigeria. Power supply is such that a serious and well established newspaper cannot afford to run production on the national electric supply by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) if it doesn't want to run into trouble. The power is not available and epileptic when available. Eni (2012) highlighted that aside the environment, economy also play a big role in the adverse performance of these newspaper houses. Many companies have folded up and thrown their workers back into the unemployment market and as a result many people who used to buy newspaper and their companies subscriptions would no longer be sustained and thus leading to dwindling revenue for the newspapers. Even, adverts from these individuals and corporate bodies would become nonexistence. To make matter worse, some of these individuals and corporate bodies have mountain-like debts which would now form a major debt burden for the media house.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper employed three theoretical propositions as its basis. First, is the Behavioural and Human Relations Approach, the second is Change theory, while the third is mediamorphosis. The theorists in the Human Relations Theories are interested in the structure and mechanics of organizations showed keen interest in the human factors. They believed that human relations and liberal leadership can increase output. They stressed the point that groups within an organization have certain social needs and that interaction in these informal groups often affect workers motivation and productivity. Notable among the theorists are Hugo Mustenberg, Elton Mayo, Lilian Gilbert and Abraham Maslow. Of



particular concern to this study is the Human Relations Approach Theory by Elton Mayo. Though this theory has been heavily criticized for having too much emphasis on emotional and social needs of employees and also not always applicable in organizations like the military and prisons where autocratic management style is required, it states that unofficial groups or settings within an organization have greater influence on the workers' overall behaviour. It also states that individual employee should be regarded as a member of a work group and as such should not be treated in isolation. Management's positive disposition to workers feeling and humanizing the workplace by encouragements to the workers will raise output and improve the organization's fortunes, is also a statement from the theory. This clearly shows that Human Relations Approach is germane to the overall interest of any organization.

There are different schools of thought regarding Change Theory. However, the "pragmatic or Big Bang change theory" and "emergent change" schools of thought are of focus here. The pragmatic or big Bang school, which movement started in 1947, views change as a set sequence where the first phase is to disengage an organization from its inertia, and create a sense of urgency and dissection ("change"). The third and final phase is about making the change stick, putting in systems to reinforce new mindset and behaviour, ensuring that the organization does not revert to its old ways (refreeze).

According to Omiyi (2009, p. 10) the "Emergent Change" programme, which became popular around the 1990s following lessons from research into complex adaptive systems, starts with the assumption that change is happening all the time and that is emerging around every living system. He asserts that the proponents of the thought believe that change starts with attempts at discovering existing pockets of innovation ("freeze"), working with that energy and shaping it ("adjust"), and then, setting the organization free again (unfreeze). He believes that the school of thought assumes a more organized, yet, also unpredictable change sequence.

Lewin's change model explains the theory further; using a three - step change model as a framework for planned change. The first step is unfreezing. Sharpe (2008, p. 8 - 9) asserts that it is a process of objectifying existing behaviours and the desired organization behaviours needed to achieve the organization's mission and shared goals. This he notes can be done by analyzing the difference between existing behaviours and needed behaviour with the involvement of organizational members. This is known as "unfreezing" existing change. The second step, he notes is moving. The step involves the process of developing new behaviours, values, and attitudes by identifying the processes and changes in organizational structure that will facilitate the accomplishment of the new behaviour combined with implementation and evaluation of achievement. The last step is refreezing. It means the stabilization of the organization's new group behaviour, values and attitudes. It is normally accomplished through system that rewards the new behaviour and with policies, education and communication that reinforces the new culture and behavioural norms.

Mediamorphosis is a recent theory propounded by Roger fiddler in 1997. According to him, mediamorphosis is the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures and social and technological innovations. He asserts that the essence of mediamorphosis is the notion that the media are complex adaptive systems. Anaeto, Osifeso and Onabajo (2008, p. 191), note that the media, as other systems, respond to external pressure, with a spontaneous process

of self-reorganization. Fiddler (1997) contends that new media do not arise spontaneously and independently; rather, they emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of older media. He suggests that emerging forms of communication media propagate dominant traits from earlier forms. The relevance of these theories to the paper cannot be over-emphasized. First, the adoption of various ICTs in newspaper operations indirectly or directly cause change, since new pattern of operations is learnt from such. Second, old machines are often replaced by new ones or with the relevant ICTs features that can make operations faster. In the modern era, only newspapers which adopt these new technologies stand a better chance to compete in the volatile newspaper environment. The adoptions of these technologies require frequent training, frequent evaluation and practical use to make the desired change possible. Again, the non-adoption limits the capacity of a newspaper to achieve its ultimate goal.

## METHODOLOGY

Survey as a form of descriptive research was used for this study. It was systematically employed in the collection of information on management problems facing newspaper from the staff and managers through structured interviews and also through analysis of some books and documents. Purposive sampling technique was particularly employed to choose Compass newspaper for this research. Purposive sampling technique has been used through the years; Campbell (1955), Godambe (1982) and is currently actively employed. Bernard (2002) Lewis & Sheppard (2006), Poggie (1972) and Tremblay (1957) all posited that despite its inherent bias, purposive sampling can provide reliable and robust data. The strength of the method actually lies in its intentional bias.

### **Compass Newspaper**

The **Nigerian Compass** is a daily newspaper with National circulation in Nigeria, covering news, business, politics and sports. The paper has weekday and weekend editions. It was founded in 2008 by Otunba Gbenga Daniel, then Executive governor of Ogun State. He served two terms as governor of the Gateway State. The first edition of the newspaper came out on Monday May 26, 2008 and immediately made headline as a major force in the newspaper industry. It brought a new revolution in newspaper business in Nigeria.

Situated at 10, Western Industrial Avenue, Isheri, Ogun State, about 3 kilometres from Lagos and about 60 kilometres from Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, it occupies a large expanse of land measuring about one and half hectares. The newspaper, from inception in 2008, had the then one of the most current printing machine in the industry. Newsprints were procured in large quantity and the best hands were tapped from existing media houses in the country. The company provided cars for its Editors and Deputy Editors. A chalet was also constructed to assist the management staffs reside close to office in a way to get the best out of them. Recreation was in the mind of the founders as a rendezvous for journalist was built to cater for this aspect. In fact the paper had it all round. No wonder in 2009, about eight months in the market, the newspaper won the Dame Award as 'The fastest growing newspaper in Nigeria.

### **Organizational Structure**

**Nigerian Compass Newspaper** started in 2008 with a robust organizational structure which was later discovered to be too robust and cumbersome, and has since been modified a couple of times. The first Daily Editor of the newspaper was Mr. Bayo Oguntimehin, while the Saturday was being edited by Mr. Dotun Oladipo, who later became the Sunday Editor,

while Gabriel Akinadewo was the pioneer Sunday Editor. It started with Executive Directors Admin, Finance, and Accounts. The Editor in Chief was the managing director and the direct head of Editorials issues in the newspapers. The structure was said to have caused some friction at some point because of overlap of roles and issues bordering on control. The various departments were headed by managers apart from editorial, which is naturally controlled by an Editor. The newspaper started with three titles; Daily, Saturday and Sunday. Each of these titles has its Editor and Deputy Editor. The paper has its slogan as "a different kind of newspaper".

### **The Vision**

To become Nigeria's leading newspaper as defined by influence, circulation and profitability

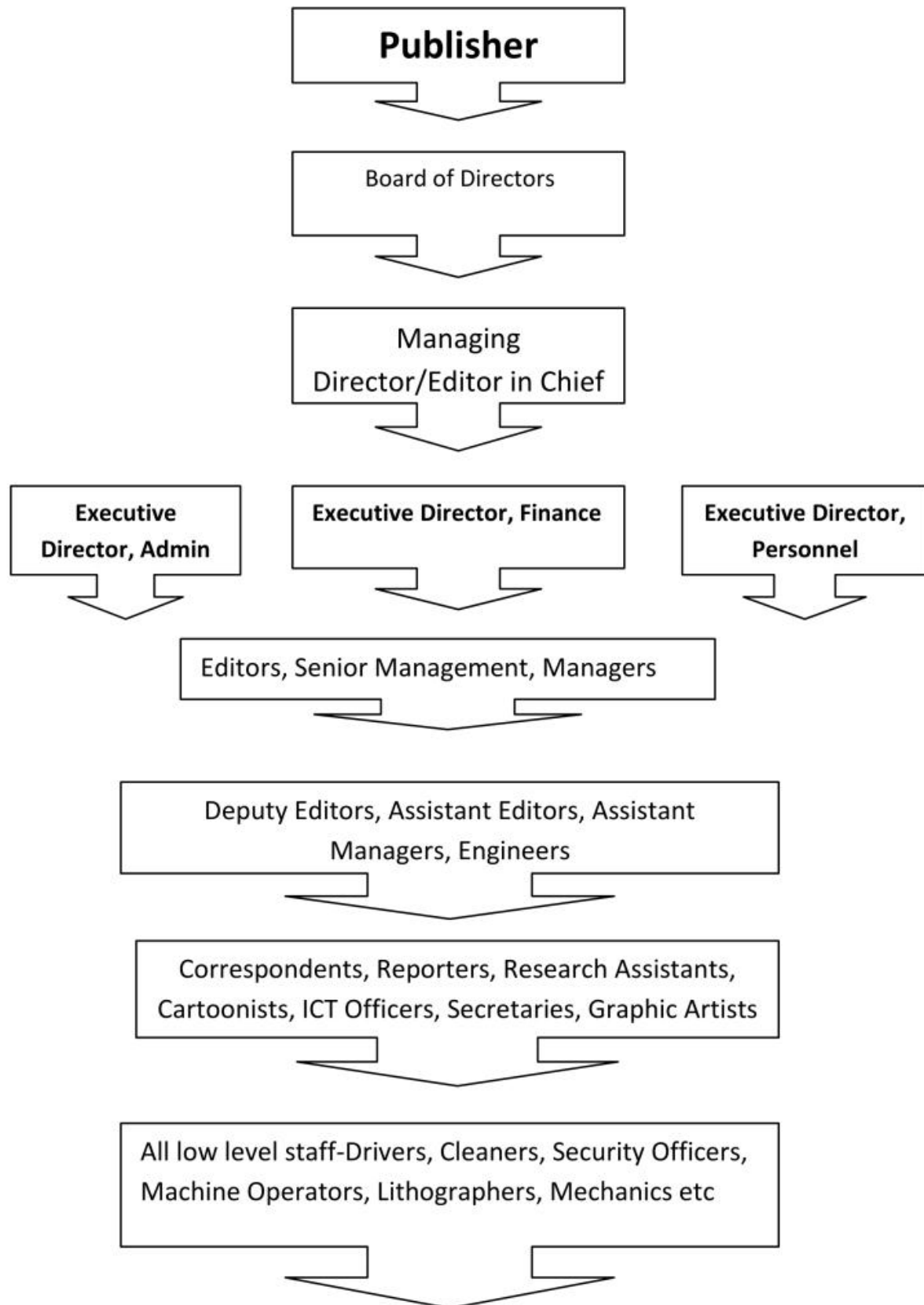
### **The Mission Statement**

To provide all the news all the time, Compass will deliver unadulterated, unbiased news without limitation. We will provide information that will help our readers take important decisions in all areas of their lives, and promptly too.

The newspaper also had it set out to reach, by 6 am every day, the streets in all the states of Nigeria. From Lagos to Maiduguri, Port Harcourt to Sokoto, and that it shall be faithful to prompt delivery on the market. Over 25 distribution vans were procured and drivers employed to ensure the just stated mission was accomplished.

In the area of manpower, the newspaper claims to have combed the media industry for the best hands available. Seasoned professionals who share the aspirations of the promoters were brought in to prepare the industry for the journey of "return to excellence in journalism". They were motivated like never before in the industry. All line Editors and above were given brand new official cars, fat and attractive housing loans, guest house apartment in the newspaper's chalet, executive staff busses for other staff, state of the art digital cameras for all reporters and correspondents. A retreat was also arranged to inculcate the spirit of Compass into the new staff at Ijebu Ode. At the retreat, everyone shed the encumbrances of the previous experience and donned the toga of the new brand. A compass family evolved at the end of the retreat led by the following people.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Gbolabo Ogunsanwo</b>	Chairman, Board of Directors
<b>Biodun Oduwale</b>	Editor in Chief
<b>Chief Seyi Oduntan</b>	Executive Vice Chairman
<b>Titi Mustapha</b>	Advert manager
<b>Prof Ayo Olukotun</b>	Chairman, Editorial Board
<b>Dare Babarinsa</b>	Board Member
<b>Bayo Oguntimehin</b>	Daily Editor
<b>Gabriel Akinadewo</b>	Sunday Editor



The above organogram became too superfluous and is being redesigned from time to time as the paper grows. Presently, the executive Directors have been taken out. Also done away with is the standing Editorial Board format which was not in the organogram. The paper presently uses part time writers and the Editors to generate and write editorials for the newspaper. Before now, a 10-man Editorial Board, with a secretary and an Editorial Page Editor was in place. They used to meet once in a week and topics were shared among the members which in turn became the editorials after being worked on by the Editorial page editor and the Chairman, Editorial Board.

Compass newspaper has eight departments namely: Editorial, Accounts/Finance, Admin/Personnel, Circulation, Adverts, Technical, ICT and Production. The Editorial department is headed by the Editor, while Accounts, Admin, Circulation, Adverts, ICT and Production are managed by managers. The Technical department is being managed by an engineer.

## FINDINGS

The major problems as highlighted earlier, are divided into two; general and internal or peculiar problems.

### (General Problems)

The study found out the following to be the general problems which emanate from the larger society to affect businesses generally. They are related to virtually all businesses in that society. However, for fear of repetition, some of these general problems reoccur internally and would only be mentioned under the general societal related problems.

**The dearth of good reporters also contributes to these problems:** Dedicated reporters are the hallmark of good media performance, but over the course of the past decade, good and dedicated reporters are on the decline as other more lucrative businesses have enticed the few good ones and that has drastically reduced the number of qualified hands to handle the reporting tasks. As the first line of reporting, quality reporters are elements that cannot be compromised for quality production. Many reporters have put their newspaper in trouble by writing libellous stories.

**Social media proliferation:** The advent of social media has had its negative impact on newspaper business as news that would have been hitherto reported the next day are now being reported on the social media seconds after the occurrence or the break of such news. By the time the newspaper goes to press the following day, it would have been stale and nobody wants to buy stale news. This competition with the social media is a great issue that is now being dealt with by many media organizations by enlisting on these platforms and breaking the news along other newsbreak sites.

**Stale educational curriculum for media managers and workers:** The curriculum run by various journalism and management based institutions are not designed to meet the challenges of contemporary media management. The institutions run archaic courses with little recourse to prevalent media challenges and ways to deal with them.

**Power instability:** Every activity either industrial or domestic rest on good power supply. The prevalent situation in the country where there is interrupted power supply across the country is worrisome as excessively high bill on diesel and other alternative power supply sources takes a chunk of the meager fund available to the media houses. Production and other vital activities are being carried out on the reliable alternative sources.

**Technological backwardness:** The lag in the employment of latest technological trends in the country is one of the major issues in newspaper management in the country. Old ways of analogue and manual editorial and production processes are still being employed and this usually slow down the process thereby militating against deadline for production. Only few newspaper organizations have the latest technology in terms machines and other production gadgets. The cameras are getting outdated and even the computers.

**High cost of machinery:** The high cost of deploying the best and latest technology is a big issue in managing a newspaper company. For instance the latest printing machine costs about 1 billion naira. This is a colossal sum that is difficult to invest if the owner is not in control of state power or an economic juggernaut.

**High cost of training manpower for the machinery:** The sophistication of contemporary machines and gadgets require an up to date training to be able to maximize the potentials of these machinery. These trainings are sometimes done outside the country and this involves a lot of money.

**High cost of printing materials:** Newsprint, ink, plates and other printing materials are too expensive to procure and this makes newspaper business more difficult. The price keeps going up because they are imported from overseas and had the interplay of foreign or international trade. This leads to high cost of producing a newspaper. It was argued that a copy of the Nigerian Compass costs about N180:00 and sells for N150:00. The N30:00 deficit ordinarily is expected to be paid for by the advertisement but even the adverts are not forthcoming

**Government policies, repressive laws and instability in government:** The inconsistencies in policies of government and sometimes the summersault of these policies affect the environment newspapers operate. Issues like ban on imported materials and the likes are antithetical to good management of the newspaper business

**Lack of managerial training and retraining:** Editors, Directors and other media managers need contemporary training in modern newspaper management to be able to flow with the trend in journalism. Journalism is evolving with time and managers need to be trained to be able to inculcate standard contemporary management practices. The training should be periodical and retaining too.

**Sabotage:** Competitors work against the success of their competitors. Saboteurs work endlessly to ensure failure of the business. This is done for various reasons.

**Poor funding:** Newspaper companies, like any other company, need sufficient capital to run effectively and in many Nigerian newspaper organizations, not much fund are available because they rely solely on the goodwill of the founders and cover sale and these sources may not be adequate to cater for the financial requirements of the organization to run properly.

**Advertisers' choice:** Advertisements are the major source of income for the newspaper companies. While they strive to entice the advertisers with good editorial contents, the advertisers in turn have their yardstick and measurement parameters to measure where to put their adverts and by extension, their money.

**Public perception:** Readers have different background and these backgrounds inform their choice of newspapers. No matter how brilliantly written some newspapers are, some



readers will not buy them, instead, they will settle for their choice which could be informed by their level of education, cultural affiliations, religious beliefs and other socio cultural factors.

**Inability to match media with business:** Another issue militating against media organization management in Nigeria is the lack of workers to take their job serious with the thinking that the newspaper was established primarily to make money is a business venture. It is disheartening that many staff of our newspaper companies feels the newspaper is just there to fill its place in the social responsibility scheme and thus only interested in this while the business aspect of the company is neglected and left in the hands of the advert executives.

**Absence of functional research department:** This is a huge letdown in most of our newspaper houses. The research department is supposed to conduct time to time study on emerging trends, readers' preferences and market demands in bid to adequately advise other departments on what is required of them. It also seeks to know what the paper is doing which is not right. Many successful newspaper organizations have functional research departments.

### **Peculiar Problems**

The interview this researcher had with the managers of this newspaper including former editors, were treated generally and the interviewee deliberately preferred to state the problems in general terms without direct mention to names and specific departments, and the issues include.

Reasons and intentions for founding media houses is a direct problem that started the problems of Nigerian Compass. The orientation of the founders of many newspaper companies and interests go a long way in streamlining the operation of the newspaper. For instance, a politician who formed a newspaper organization for the purpose of making it a public relations arm of its political machinery will automatically direct the editorial policy towards this interest. It was found out that Otunba Gbenga Daniel, the then governor of Ogun State, established The Nigerian Compass as a way of counter-balancing the alleged propaganda of some opposition Lagos newspapers, notably, The Nation, which was believed to be sponsored by Senator Bola Tinubu, then governor of Lagos State. This intention did not allow freehand and absolute objectivity and this informed the type of media managers that were deployed from inception.

The political and economic cum social affiliations of the owners of newspapers go a long way in affecting the operations of the newspaper. It shapes the perception of the public towards the title. This is related to the earlier point as the People's Democratic Party controlled Ogun State felt Lagos was using the overwhelming presence of media in the opposition Action Congress controlled state to an undue advantage and felt all attempt to corner few of them to his side failed, informed his forming of the Compass.

Arbitrary appointment of unqualified persons into key managerial positions is another factor. Appointments to boards are no longer made on merit or statesmanship but on socio-economic and political patronage. Friends and well-wishers, even family members, are appointed to manage many media houses without recourse to professionalism. Executive Directors who were appointed to run the company with the board members are political and close associates of the owner and most of who had no media management experience previously, and this was the beginning of the problems.

Publishing of more than one title by the Western Publishing Company contributed to misuse of funds. Newspaper organizations who publish more than one title have the problem of synergy and sustenance. Though, it is supposed to be a blessing as most of the workers would be used for the production of different titles but this could be counterproductive as these titles may be competing on the stands. Instead for the Western Publishing Company to limit itself to the production of just the Nigerian Compass Daily and Weekend, it immediately added the publication of a magazine to it- The Westerner, and this also caused so many problems for management because roles started clashing.

Circulation problems emanating from difficult, diverse terrain and poor network of roads in Nigeria it is a difficult to distribute copies. The politically tailored policy of the newspaper made it unappealing to numerous readers according to an internal research by the organization. The public opinion of the newspaper, which was informed by its posture, led to the declining fortunes of the paper. Another issue discovered by management is that there is low patronage from intended audience or readers. The intended beneficiaries of the newspaper, PDP loyalists, PDP governors and the ruling federal government failed to advertise and patronize the paper shortly after its takeoff thereby destabilizing the calculation of the founders.

The overwhelming pervasive corruptive tendencies in the country have in no small measure created similar effect in the newspaper companies. Managers and other workers want to make money at the expense of the company. Money not approved is being spent on personal effects and company properties are converted to personal use at the expense of the business. Unsold copies of the newspapers are not declared while money made is diverted. Mention was made of a circulation manager who collects over N600, 000:00 daily to circulate less than 40, 000 copies initially being published by the company, and was discovered that he actually spend less than N100, 000 on the job. He was making about N500, 000 naira from the company on daily basis. Another manager was said to have carted away properties of the company for personal use.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Media organizations should as a matter of urgency partner with journalism institutions with a view to contributing to the curriculum of these schools so that well trained reporters who are the hallmark of good media performance can be produced for better quality content in the newspapers
2. The government should make policies that will strengthen media practice with special emphasis on press freedom and association. By so doing, newspaper organizations will not be gagged into streamlining their editorial policy to suit the government of the day
3. Present and prospective owners of newspaper organizations should distinctly define their political and economic interactions with the newspaper so as to allow the newspaper have a good public perception because a paper that is perceived to be objective and fair will likely be accepted more.
4. Development of the agricultural sector, particularly the paper mill companies: Government should revive the Oku Oboku Newsprint Mill in Akwa Ibom State to make newspaper print readily available in large quantity without the stress of importation hassles and at cheap local rates. This will go a long way in assisting the newspaper organizations

5. Improvement in the power sector: Power is the life wire of any nation hence the urgent need to boost power supply beyond the present meager 12, 000 megawatts. Nigeria with a population of over 165 million people cannot be doing as low as that while countries like Egypt and South Africa are generating over 50, 000 megawatts and are still working assiduously at improving on it.
6. Appointments into boards of newspapers should be purely based on professionalism and not compensation as presently being done. People and personalities who have served as editors or media managers, even teachers of journalism, should be saddled with such responsibility and not friends and well-wishers. It should not be taken as a compensation avenue if really the newspaper intends to survive.
7. Without prejudice to the certificates being brandished by many of our editors and media managers, periodic training and retraining sessions should be put in place to freshen and enliven their minds. This will improve productivity by further opening their eyes to the latest trend in the industry.
8. Technical know-how deficiency should be looked into by the media managers and owners. A situation whereby only very few technologists are available to service machines and equipment is worrisome. More investments should be put in this direction as this is the vital components in production.

## CONCLUSION

This paper found out that though the challenges facing newspaper in this country are daunting, it is however a case of all hope not lost as some have wriggle their ways out of the daunting challenges and remain afloat and profitable, while serving the public interest, to the best of their abilities. The frequency of change of some of the information technologies put constant pressure on management, added to the harsh economic conditions, which tend to vitiate the progress been made. The type and level of management problems hinder the growth and development of newspapers in the country. The process of founding, managing and sustaining newspaper from the initial 'new-to-the-market' status, to competing with the already known and acceptable ones and other newcomers pose a serious challenge to the industry.

Therefore, governments, media owners, media managers, reporters and other workers in the newspaper houses should ensure the survival of their various places of work in a bid to sustain their livelihoods.

While some media organizations have survived the economic hardship that has been foisted on the country by different economic strategies, some have not been able to surmount the problems and this is discouraging. All hands must be on deck to ensure that enabling environment is created, corruption is brought under check and economic improvement be guaranteed.

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