

Why it is unethical for PR agencies to mark own 'homework'

The first independent communications/PR measurement agency in Nigeria, P+ Measurement Services, recently became a member of the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC).



Philip Odiakose

In a chat with Philip Odiakose, lead consultant of the firm P+ Measurement Services, he spoke on the benefit of being AMEC member and why it is “unethical, unhealthy and unprofessional” for PR agencies to mark their own homework.

This is an excerpt from that interview with BrandArea:

Q: Communications/PR measurement is key to the growth of any business. How is this practice in Nigeria?

A: AMEC is the International ‘Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication’. The PR measurement practice is a budding industry in Nigeria. Brands are gradually warming up to the idea that value measurement is a core aspect of every marketing communications campaign. Benchmarking has become more important, PR measurement is gradually taking center stage and definitely trend setting will complete the revolution for future performances of businesses and brands and we are glad that P+ is at the forefront of this evolution in the Nigerian business space.

There are no independent associations in Nigeria for the consultants in Nigeria, that is the reason PR agencies can take independent monitoring briefs, which is unethical, unhealthy and unprofessional for an agency to mark their own homework.

Q: Can you expand more on that?

A: From my experience in the IMC industry, I can tell you that sometimes agencies trim down on the negative report in order to look good in the eyes of the brand owners. Especially if the story is being published in one of the second tier publications that they feel doesn't matter. That is why part of the service we also provide to our clients is crisis management advisory. We understand the behaviour of the online media; we have monitored them and their feeders for a long time to know how to engage them when we want to.

Q: How do you feel becoming the first member of AMEC in Nigeria?

A: We are excited to be the first member of AMEC in Nigeria. We are also happy to be the first independent communications/PR measurement agency in Nigeria. Our drive has been to improve the value proposition of brands so as to create an environment where brands can improve their services after reviewing the results of their campaigns. We want PR agencies to start seeing independent communications measurement agencies as partners (friends) rather than foes, as our work helps to reflect the effectiveness of their activities.

Q: Many brand owners have been cutting costs on marketing communications, how has that affected P+?

A: The economic situation has affected brands no doubt, but we have been able to play a vital role in the growth of several brands even in this recession. We have proved through this period of recession that our consistent services are valuable to our clients by constantly providing them with access to information about their brands and supplementary information about the economic situation, so the effect on us has been minimal.

Q: Tell us about some of the things P+ has done this year?

A: As new entrants into the Nigerian market, we are proud of some of the work we've been able to do this year. We have provided PR measurement and media monitoring for clients locally and internationally across diverse industries ranging from financial institutions, airlines, mobile technology, politics and government, tourism and resorts (South Africa), beverages and regional carnivals.

Q: Where do you see P+ in the next 5 years?

A: In the next five years I see an industry where brands will put a stop to the practice of allowing PR agencies to handle their media monitoring and reportage, an industry where professionalism is paramount and one in which P+ is bringing in new innovations to help PR agencies and communications managers implement the new public relations measurement standard of the industry.

Q: What does being a member of AMEC mean for P+?

A: AMEC membership is internationally representative, with members in over 48 different countries, providing an opportunity to network and do business across borders which P+ happens to be the only member in Nigeria currently. I have always said that measurements and evaluations are destined for top management capacities; from the creative strategy sessions and the processes of determining results. The future of the measurement industry is an industry where measurement consultants are called in during the planning phase to help determine a scope for how to measure results of their campaigns on all platforms from the start.