



eSHEKELS

Telecom  
in Nigeria  
a role in the call

# Telecom in Nigeria: A Role in the Call

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# Cutting to the Meat

- ◆ ***“Telecom in Nigeria: A Role in the Call”***  
**can be easily split into two parts:**
  - Professional Memoirs (Chapters 2-4)
  - Telecoms Industry Info (Chapters 1, 5-7)
- ◆ **With the main themes including...:**

# The Pains of Pioneering

- ◆ **Building telecoms networks in Nigeria is a tough task**
  - The complexity of the Right-of-Way
  - 6 levels of official & “unofficial” approvals for most network installations
  - Approvals & withdrawals of approvals go in tandem
  - Entrepreneurs typically feel that the system is out to frustrate & shoot them down
  - *“The cumbersome process of securing approvals can be very complicated and daunting” (GA)*

# Rolling Out the Network

- ◆ **Network build, for any telecom operator, is littered with:**
  - Enforced work stoppages by competing govts, agencies & bureaucracies
  - Attacks by street urchins & other private individuals
  - Arbitrary arrests of network officials
  - Destabilization of physical traffic & other services
  - Problems getting interconnectivity

# Who Owns the Land?

## ◆ Govt, Residents, or “Area boys”!

- Govt: many agencies have designed special fees for telecom operators!
- Residents: you may have Right-of-Use but do you have Right-of-Implementation?!
- Area boys (street urchins): shrewd and ruthless negotiators, you do without them to your utter peril
  - “[Lukeman] came back that evening and asked to meet with the overall man and not a small manager like the site supervisor” (GA, pg 49)

# Traffic Overload

- ◆ **The result: Generally poor network services**
- ◆ **Are we still in the past???**
  - Nitel, Operators Discuss Poor Services in Lagos (Guardian, May 10, 2001)
  - Operators Cry Out Over Congested Telephone Network (Guardian, March 22,2001)
  - Nitel Blames Inefficiency on Privatization (Punch, March 27, 2001)
- ◆ **The past reads like the present...demand for communications is still being underestimated**
  - *“It becomes terrible at peak periods between 10am and 6pm daily, with slight improvement during the late night hours”*  
(GA, pg 27)

# Stories from the Field

- ◆ **Is the Police Post fixed or mobile?**
  - Endless wait for the “Order from Above”
- ◆ **Explosive Encounter with the Commandment**
  - *“He stared at me under his pair of glasses and said, “You are the people destroying the front of our barracks. What are you people laying in that deep trench? I hope it is not explosives?”*
- ◆ **Accommodating ‘His Excellency’ the Quarter Master**
  - *“You are required to report yourself to the Chief of Staff at 8am to be arrested”*
- ◆ **The fear of NR – the beginning of native wisdom in Nigeria, even for operators**
  - “Repent or be impeached!”

# Summary

- ◆ **For me, the biggest challenge facing the telecoms industry today is getting operators to shift their focus from the network to the customer**
- ◆ **Telecoms consumers are more loyal to their numbers than they are to the network**

# Conclusion

- ◆ **Though not a perfect book, "*Telecom in Nigeria: A Role in the Call*" nevertheless is a vital reference material and an invaluable part of Nigeria's ICT information infrastructure**
- ◆ **GA has demonstrated courage, boldness, commitment and inclusiveness and needs to be encouraged**
- ◆ **Highly recommended**



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