

REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSIONALISM, MANAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

ACEN

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Purpose

- To challenge your thinking about the future of ACEN and your profession as consulting engineers
 - If your vision isn't scary, it probably isn't big enough!
- To share experience in building professional service firms, particularly in emerging markets such as Nigeria!
 - The key is thinking **outside the box!**
 - Most of the drivers of growth are outside the firm!

Reflections

- I. Professionalism
 - I. Global best practices
 - II. Enabling environment
- II. Management
 - I. Professional firms are businesses
 - II. They must be managed for results
- III. Advocacy
 - I. Create an enabling environment
 - II. Help make Nigeria successful

I. Professionalism

- ACEN already focused on key success factors (KSFs)
- Global best practices for professional service firms are relatively proven and transferable
- The challenge is to apply them in an emerging nation.
- What are the biggest challenges in Nigeria?

I. Professionalism (contd)

- My Nigerian experience is that the biggest challenges are threefold:
 1. Education System
 2. Governance – both public and private sector
 3. Lack of economic growth

I. Professionalism (contd)

- Why are Brazil, India and China succeeding while Nigeria is muddling through?
 1. Enormous investment in best education and attracting talent back from the diaspora
 2. Improved governance and stimulating the private sector
 3. Diversified economic growth of 5-10% per year for decades

Shouldn't Nigeria do the same??

II. MANAGEMENT

- ACEN members are generally small and lack capacity for major projects
- ACEN programs and global links indicate focus on global best practices
- Similar experience – legal, management, consultants, medical, etc.
- Are such firms managed using proven business and management practices?

II. MANAGEMENT (contd)

- Global experience shows that firms growing to appropriate size and scale benefit from
 1. Good management and attractive career opportunities
 2. Legal requirements/succession plans
 3. Attractive investment climate
 4. Competition based on merit
 5. Prosperous economies

II. MANAGEMENT contd

- Questions to consider –
 - Are ACEN firms managed to become long term institutions?
 - Do leaders know how to build successful **businesses**?
 - Do schools and associations teach management?
 - Is partnering with international firms well developed?

II. MANAGEMENT (contd)

- My experience is that being a good professional is essential but **not** sufficient for success
- Must go beyond recruiting, training, supervision, quality control and coaching
- The keys are external
 - Enabling environment
 - Relationships (Win/Win)
 - Improved economic growth and governance

III. ADVOCACY

- Advocacy is linked to marketing, image building, relationships and networking, community support, nation building and wealth creation
- Key is to change the environment in which the Firm operates so that both the Firm and all stakeholders succeed (Win/Win)

III. ADVOCACY (contd)

- Four Questions
 1. Does ACEN help shape the Nigerian economic agenda and the investment climate?
 2. Does ACEN advocate contracting and business practices which minimize corruption?
 3. Do ACEN firms help their clients prosper?
 4. Can ACEN take on bigger challenges?

WRAP-UP

- ACEN is clearly on track to bigger and better future in a Nigeria that is increasingly encouraging.
- But can the vision be bolder and bigger?
 1. Best global practices of consulting engineering
 2. Best business management practices for professional firms
 3. Foster the enabling environment for ACEN and its stakeholders
 4. Contributing to Nigeria being one of the BRIC+11

THANK YOU

LET'S DISCUSS