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TOPIC: Principles and Strategies for Surveyors to Operate as Business Professionals

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the general neglect of the business component of the Surveying Practice by Surveyors. There are different components such as the intellectual, technological, business, moral, etc; that combine together in the making of a complete Surveying Practitioner.

Surveyors have not achieved much in the area of business. The justification for this lies in the low remuneration that Surveyors receive from their products and services in comparison with those of their allied professionals in the built industry. The need to harmonize business with professionalism therefore becomes inevitable.

The objective of this paper is to provide the Principles for Surveyors to operate as Business Professionals and also to propose Strategies for Wealth Creation.

A Professional takes his work seriously all of the time, full time and invests in his career (Daniel, L; 2014). Business should be a principal activity in our profession to earn money. The essence of business is to make profit. And profit on the other hand means more money. Professionalism when combined with Business makes the Professional (Surveyor) win more of a living with less effort.

Principles proposed for Surveyors to operate as Business Professionals include: Effective Communication, Concern for Customers, Mentorship, Change, Ethical Practice, Giving Charity, and Good Self Esteem; amongst others.

For Surveyors in Private Practice, the strategies proposed for wealth creation include: Publicity, Provision of clear Justification for Costing in the Financial Proposals for Survey Contracts, Giving Charity, Diversification of Practice, Continuous Professional Development, Association/Collaboration with other Professional Bodies and other Socio-Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) with business inclinations, and Enforcement of Surveyors' Professional Rights; amongst others.

While for Surveyors in Academia, the Strategies proposed for Wealth Creation include: Collaboration with Foreign Embassies to obtain Education Grants, Collaboration with Private Practicing Surveyors, Conversion of Research Papers/Handouts to Published Books, Pursuit of Consultancy Services, Conduct of Workshops/Seminars, Execution of Researches that are of Patent Value, and Development of Proposals for implementable Projects; amongst others.

The resulting effect of the application of these Principles and Strategies is that Surveyors will be empowered to achieve a more successful and fulfilled Professional life.

The paper recommended amongst others that Surveyors should develop a digital marketing strategy in order to promote and market their products to increase wealth. It was finally concluded that there will be improved wealth generation and enhanced professional dignity for Surveyors through the application of the Principles and Strategies proposed.

KEY WORDS

Principles; Strategies; Surveyors; Business; Professionalism; Wealth.

1. INTRODUCTION

Surveying has always been described as the bedrock of all meaningful developments. Despite this universally accepted norm, surveying products, which are in the form of maps, plans, descriptive diagrams and reports; etc are not well appreciated both by the public and by policy and decision makers in government; in comparison with other infrastructural products such as buildings, bridges, roads; etc of other allied professionals in the built industry. This error on the part of government (and the public as well) of non appreciation of survey products, has therefore to a large extent resulted in poor patronage of Surveyors, thereby affecting their wealth (income).

The lack of appropriate marketing strategies by Surveyors to bring survey products to the door steps of users, particularly to policy and decision makers in government; further worsened the case of poor patronage and wealth generation.

One basic concept learnt in Surveying is “How to Overcome Obstacles” on site (in the course of field measurements and observations), ironically, Surveyors have not been taught (or have not learnt) “How to Overcome Financial Obstacles” in their professional practice.

With this situation of inadequate patronage of survey products therefore, an understanding of the principles to operate as Business Professionals and the application of Wealth Creation strategies by Surveyors become inevitable.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The non appreciation of survey products (as earlier defined), which has to a large extent, resulted in poor patronage of Surveyors; and the operation by Surveyors as mere Practitioners rather than

as Professionals and better still as Business Professionals, all sum together to affect Surveyors' wealth (income).

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to proffer solution to the problem of inadequate wealth generation from survey products and services. Therefore, the modalities for Surveyors from different sectors (private practice, public service, academia; etc) in the surveying profession to practice as Business Professionals in order to generate meaningful wealth will be our focus.

4. BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONALISM

The place of professionalism in the practice of any profession cannot be overemphasized, and the Surveying Profession is not an exemption. It is however a common error to assume that all Practitioners are Professionals and that all Professionals are Business Professionals. Not all Practicing Surveyors (Practitioners) are Professionals and not all Professionals are Business Professionals.

A mere Practitioner is one who engages "casually" in his trade or skill simply to earn money, whereas a Professional is someone who takes his work seriously all of the time, full time and invests in his career.

Business is the way we interact with each other and our environment. Business must be taken or understood by Surveyors to be a principal activity of our profession that we must engage in to earn money.

Too often, professionals generally concentrate mainly on the technicalities of their profession and leave out the business components/management to marketers who know next to nothing about the profession and the products derivable from their services. This is a great error! To be technically sound and be business naïve endangers professionalism.

A Business Professional therefore is someone who gets involved in the commercial aspect of his product as well as practicing his profession full time and investing in it. Business and Professionalism should therefore be harmonized by all professionals in general and by Surveyors in particular, in order to achieve professional fulfillment. Surveyors will win more of a living with less effort when they specialize and trade.

In most parts of the developing world today, the business of Surveying is mainly Cadastral based; whereas there are other sectors of Surveying business such as Oil & Gas, Construction, Governance and GIS, Geological Studies and General Mining, Environmental, Agriculture, Transportation and other Infrastructural Development, Security and Defense, Education and Training, Research and Development, Disaster Managements, General Planning, Corruption Control and Value Systems, Housing and Population Management, Poverty Controls and Millennium Goals; etc that practicing Surveyors need to explore (Dabiri, O.T; 20..).

5. MONEY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Our discussion on Money and Professionalism becomes necessary in our role as Surveyors and as Business Professionals for many reasons. Feeling right about money is what separates the best business professional from the rest of the population. Money is an economic marker of wealth that facilitates business transactions (Daniel, L; 2014). The concern of money in professionalism arises from the fact that money lubricates and fuels the economy. It is also a primary measure of our professional and personal success. A firm understanding of money will benefit us as Surveyors and as Business Professionals because it is imperative that we understand that which we seek.

The essence of business is to make profit and profit on the other hand means more money. Surveyors operating as Business Professionals must therefore seek to improve their financial income from time to time. Surveyors, being solution providers, have the legitimate right to be handsomely rewarded for their services, because money is a reward for solving problems. Money and Professionalism are therefore not incongruent or disconnected. Money is a defense (Holy Bible, KJV). Money is needed to defend our professional rights, if and when necessary. Business and money are therefore essential to our successful living. As professionals, we need money to be able to have access to affordable technology and knowledge workers (Chee, H.T; 2012). Professionalism when combined with Business will make the Surveyor win more of a living with less effort.

6. PRINCIPLES & STRATEGIES TO OPERATE AS BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

The quest to operate as Business Professionals by Surveyors cuts across all sectors in Surveying, either in government, private practice, services or technological development, in academia or research institutions.

6.1 Principles for Surveyors to Operate as Business Professionals

The under listed principles, if well followed, will enable Surveyors to Operate as Business Professionals:

(i) **Effective Communication:** For all professionals, good communication skills are what make the difference between earning a lot of money and a little money. The business success of a professional Surveyor will depend upon how well he can communicate and how well he understands what to communicate. The Surveyor's ability to make money depends on how well he connects and communicates with others. Surveyors must establish meaningful connections with their clients.

(ii) **Concern for Clients:** Concern for clients should be the hallmark for a Surveyor as a business professional. That is where the phrase, "the customer is always right" comes from. The business professional puts his client before himself as well as value his employees.

(iii) **Mentorship:** To be a successful business professional, there is the need to seek out mentors. The major part of what we need to know is learnt on the job. Industrial training should be strictly entrenched in the curriculum of Surveyors' in training. A Surveyor who will succeed as a business professional will always seek out mentors, people from whom he can learn. And later, when he climbs to position of leadership, he too should be a mentor to others.

(iv) **Ethical Practice:** The Surveying profession is one that adheres to standards, including ethical standards and conduct. A Surveyor must therefore practice ethically in order to be a successful business professional. He needs not to make money by cheating. He must not directly or indirectly act to undermine the reputation or business prospects of other fellow Surveyors.

(v) **Good Self Esteem:** The way Surveyors feel about themselves and their profession will dictate how others are going to see them and their profession. Not until Surveyors see themselves as dignitaries and position themselves in dignitary areas, will they be able to attract dignitaries. To succeed in business as a professional, the Surveyor must not only be a good and moral person, he must also cultivate a principle of strong conviction of good self esteem and be confident of who he is in the committee of professionals.

(vi) **Enforcement of Surveyors' Right:** Surveyors must be conscious of their rights and obligations and be ready to defend, assert, protect and perform them (Shuaibu, M. A; 2023).

Surveyors' right to wealth/revenue enhancement must be enforced through legal means (if it becomes that necessary) when violated. Incapacitation to practice or charge appropriate survey fees must be challenged individually or collectively by the appropriate Surveying Professional Bodies.

(vii) **Operating as Expert:** Surveying jobs must be undertaken as a Consulting job and not as an appendage service of other professional skills. The Surveyor must be an expert in his field, charge his fees appropriately and work as such.

(viii) **Continuous Training and Development:** A pragmatic program of continuing education and professional development must be put in place for Surveyors to operate as business professionals. By demonstrating highest level of mastering of his field, the Surveyor can achieve much through continuous trainings. Knowledge and skills are advanced through training and re-training. Having been trained, the Surveyor must use his knowledge and skills for the enhancement of his products and revenue (wealth).

The knowledge base of the Surveyor must be improved for better understanding and application of ethics, in order to expose him to ethical dilemmas/challenges, and to carryout value based ethical analysis and apply ethical principles in making professional and business decisions (Kalagbor, S.B; 2022).

(ix) **Diligence:** A professional is someone who does the work that he must do when he must do it. The Surveyor as a business professional must cultivate the principle of hard work. He must do his work and do it on time. Diligence yields prosperity!

(x) **Professional Investment:** The Surveyor as a business professional must not just practice to make money but must also make meaningful investment on his work and make impact on the society where he operates for a better world. He must invest in people by way of providing industrial training for survey trainees, offering of scholarships, providing education grants to institutions offering training in the field of Surveying & Geo-Informatics, purchasing and equipping his office with the state of the art surveying equipments for improved capacity.

(xi) **Time Management:** The Surveyor must cultivate the habit of committing himself to time management. Every day of a professional should be full of productive work, except his rest day.

(xii) **Embrace Change:** Change means the possibility of improvement. Avoiding change leads to stagnation. As the radical change being brought about by technology is being engaged in the business world, so must Surveyors also embrace change. The Surveyor as a business professional must be ready to accept and adopt new technologies in surveying practice as well as be ready to change his business tactics so that he does not lose sight of his underlying purpose. Success in making money comes about through the ability to change and deal with change.

(xiii) **Decent Appearance:** The Surveyor as a business professional must maintain a lifestyle of neat and decent dressing. He must appear corporate at social functions and not in field attires. An adage says, “The way you dress is the way you are addressed”. Another says, “The way you appear is the way you are approached”. How we dress and appear as Surveyors goes a long way or has a great impact on us and on our business dealings as professionals.

(xiv) **Good Business Reputation (Integrity):** A good business reputation must be maintained by the Surveyor to operate as a business professional. He must be a person of proven integrity in order to sustain patronage from his clients.

6.2 Strategies for Surveyors to Create Wealth

The creation of wealth is the underlying foundation for all societies. It is always a positive, desirable thing for a society and for individuals. Wealth has little to do with birth, luck, or circumstance, but everything to do with choice, commitment to change, discipline, self improvement, and hard work (Daniel, L; 2014). Surveyors as business professionals cannot shy away from creating wealth. Our discussion on strategies for wealth creation will focus on Surveyors in Private Practice and Surveyors in Academia.

6.2.1 Strategies for Wealth Creation By Surveyors in Private Practice

(i) **Publicity and Marketing Strategy:** A good publicity must be undertaken as a strategy for wealth creation by Surveyors by educating the public and those in government on the importance or relevance of their products to development. Digital marketing strategy should be developed to provide easy access of obtaining survey products by clients, which in turn will improve and increase Surveyors’ patronage and wealth generation.

(ii) **Identification of Clients' Needs:** Too often, Surveyors' clients know what they want but lack the knowledge of what they really need. Identifying peoples' survey needs and providing those things needed is one sure way to make more money as business professionals.

(iii) **Giving Charity:** The giving of charity enhances the ability to make money and serves as a good strategy for wealth creation. Charity and wealth are part of the same circle because as you put out money, it comes back to you with dividends. A mindset of a giver must be developed by a professional who wants to do well in business. Giving of charity as business professionals is one way by which Surveyors can contribute their own quota to "protecting our world, and conquering new frontiers".

(iv) **Diversification of Practice:** In most parts of the developing world today, the business of Surveying is mainly Cadastral based. A strategy to diversify into other sectors of survey application services becomes imminent for wealth creation.

(v) **Connectivity and Association:** The Surveyor's ability to make money will to a reasonable extent depend on how well he is able to connect and associate with others. Connectivity, interaction and association with people of various socio-religious bodies, allied professional bodies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of business inclinations will serve as a good strategy for increasing clientele and consequently wealth.

(vi) **Adherence to Professional Scale of Fees:** Surveyors put in more labor, intellectual rigor, technical detailing; etc to arrive at their products in comparison with products/results obtained by other professionals in the built industry, and yet charge lower. There is therefore the need to avoid inferiority complex in costing/charging if we are to operate as business professionals.

A strategy of adherence to Professional Scale of Fees that spells out in clarity the justification for costing of survey jobs should be adopted as a strategy in order to create wealth for Surveyors. Remuneration that is commensurate with the technical complexity, level of responsibility, risk taking and liability services; etc rendered by Surveyors must be taken into consideration in computing survey fees and/or costing of survey contracts. Surveyors Scale of Fees must be regularly updated to meet current financial realities.

6.2.2 Strategies for Wealth Creation By Surveyors in Academia

(i) **Organization of Customized Training Workshops and Seminars:** In collaboration with Foreign Embassies of countries that have policy and fund for providing Education Grants for

training in specialized areas, Surveyors in Academia can organize customized training workshops and seminars; and thereby generate wealth.

(ii) **Leveraging on Collaboration with other Professionals in the Private Sector:** Establishing an Industrial-Institutional Working Relationship between Surveyors in academia and those in the private sectors to address and solve practical/field related problems through research will enhance the wealth of Surveyors in academia.

(iii) **Commercialization of Publications:** Turning of Research Findings and Publications into Published Books can serve as a way of wealth generation.

(iv) **Engagement in Consultancy Services:** The enormous human, intellectual and infrastructural resources and capabilities available in the surveying training institutions should be maximally utilized by Surveyors in academia to engage in consultancy services as a strategy to generate wealth.

(v) **Conduct of Patent Oriented Researches:** Output or results of researches by Surveyors in academia should be such that are marketable and/or can be turned out for industrial production. Development of softwares for surveying applications, etc will be a source of wealth generation for Surveyors in academia.

(vi) **Formulation of Implementable Project Proposals:** Consulting in the areas of Writing Project Proposals and the Formulation of Projects which can be implemented by government and agencies of government should be pursued by Surveyors in academia to create wealth.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSION

It was concluded that the application of the principles and adoption of the strategies presented in this paper, will result in increased wealth for Surveyors, it will bring about professional and business fulfillment; and Surveyors will experience enhanced professional dignity.

The paper further highlighted and concluded that the potential for wealth creation does not only reside with Surveyors in private practice but also applicable to Surveyors in all sectors of the Surveying profession including those in academia.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For Surveyors to Operate as Business Professionals, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) That Surveyors should develop a digital marketing strategy in order to promote and market their products, thereby increasing wealth.

- (ii) That the Curriculum in Surveying Education should be reviewed to incorporate subjects like: Basic Concepts in Entrepreneurship, The Surveyor in Society, Formulation and Writing of Project Proposals and Business Management.

- (iii) That Surveyors as business professionals must seek to improve their income from time to time.

- (iv) That the principles and strategies highlighted in this paper should be adopted to enable Surveyors achieve a more successful and fulfilled professional life.

- (v) That Surveyors operating as business professionals must maintain a good business reputation (integrity).

- (vi) That surveyors must see themselves as dignitaries, position themselves in dignitary areas in order to attract dignitaries to the Surveying profession.

- (vii) That the giving of charity is one of the ways by which Surveyors can contribute their quota to “protecting the world, and conquering new frontiers”.

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