



Vitafoam/ News

The House Journal of VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC

VOL. 18 NO. 1 2020

Celebrating Successful Partnership



- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- DONATION TO NCDC

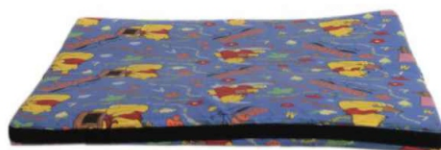




Early Days



Vita Baby Comfy



Vita Changing Mat



Vita Baby Pillow



Vita Baby Solid

Contact Us:

Tel: 07052100000, 08129982143, 08174589640, 0800-VITAFOAM (080084823626- TOLL FREE LINE)

Email or visit: response.centre@vitafoam.com.ng website: www.vitafoamng.com

www.facebook.com/Vitafoamng twitter.com/VitafoamNG

EDITORIAL TEAM

- ▶ 'Lekan Sanni – Editor-in-chief
- ▶ Ola Ogunfeyitimi
- ▶ Yemi Mofikoya
- ▶ Rachel Ogolo
- ▶ Gboyega Oluwatusin
- ▶ Victor Falope
- ▶ Ojobo Johnson
- ▶ Femi Olaiya

contents

- Editorial Pad
- Vitafoam Distributors Award
- Vitafoam Annual General Meeting
- Vitafoam Welcome First Baby of the year
- Valentine Campaign
- Management Conference
- Interview with Managing Director Vitafoam Sierra Leone
- Sales Conference
- Vitapur embarks on the project to get an Intergrated management
- Excursion & CSR
- Town Hall Meetings
- Pioneering Staff & Student of Architecture Department
- World Sleep Day
- Girls' Safety Initiative
- Birthday
- Knowledge Sharing
- 7 Facts you Should know about Depression
- Jokes

CONTENTS



▼ EDITORIAL PAD

I welcome you to this edition of our in-house magazine. This edition is coming on the heels of the Coronavirus pandemic which has ravaged economic activities all over the world. To say it has disrupted our rhythm this year is to understate the effect it has had on our business and of course, on us as individuals and our homes. It is our hope that as we gradually ease out of it, we can muster courage and some strength to pull through, and put ourselves in a position to grab the good tidings the year has in stock.

The year 2019 was an eventful one as far as sales and marketing are concerned. Kudos to our Sales and Marketing team, but more importantly, our trade partners and distributors all over the country for their commitment, drive and tenacity to ensure our bottom line remained healthy.

In appreciation of their efforts, our trade partners and distributors nationally were celebrated at a gala night where mouthwatering gifts were given out. Find out how the evening panned out and who went home with what in our cover story of this edition.

It has become our tradition annually to

welcome the First Baby of the Year at the Island Maternity Hospital with gift items for the first 3 babies and hospital management. This year wasn't an exception as you would read how we were received and what we presented.

If you want to see what our 2019 financial figures look like, read our story on the Annual General Meeting held in February, this year.

For your reading pleasure, you will also find in this edition, a couple of other interesting stories which included our donations to Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC); an extensive interview with the MD/CEO, Vitafoam Sierra Leone; the visitation of the Architecture Department of University of Ibadan to Vitapur; our celebration of World Sleep Day; articles; to mention a few.

Let me leave you to explore this interesting package. Cheers!



VITAFOAM DISTRIBUTORS' AWARD

Sheraton Hotel, Lagos State played host to guests from private and public sectors on a cool Wednesday evening, December 4, 2019 when Vitafoam Nigeria Plc celebrated and rewarded her outstanding distributors and trade partners for successes recorded in year 2019.

The night was the culmination of the distributors' award which started at the Regional level where the very best among the distributors were further picked for an evening like this. Delivery trucks, exotic cars, expensive home appliances and one week all-expense paid trip to Dubai, were all for grabs, all in effort to appreciate the contribution of the trade partners to the growth of the company. It doesn't get better than that.

The Group Managing Director, Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, Mr. Taiwo Adeniyi, explained that the symbiotic relationship between the company and its stakeholders enhanced the company's consistent dominance of the market after almost six decades of existence.

Mr. Adeniyi, who delivered the key-note address to the stakeholders at the occasion said: "I feel greatly delighted to acknowledge the sterling accomplishments of these partners, many of whom have remained with the company through thick and thin. Together, we have crossed oceans, moved

boundaries, broken barriers and raised the industry bar. It is indeed gratifying to state that the symbiotic relationship we share has enabled the company to orchestrate a winning formula that is at the root of Vitafoam's consistent dominance of the market after almost six decades in business.

"Besides being at the frontline of ensuring availability of our products to the final consumers, these trade partners have also played significant role of ensuring that we remain at the top of the game by way of superior products offerings through constructive feedback and genuine criticisms. If business is really a war, these brave men and women have demonstrated gallantry and courage expected of a winning infantry", he said.

He reiterated that as a company imbued with visionary board and management, Vitafoam had expanded its products portfolio beyond foams by diversification through its subsidiaries which produce diverse products.

At the end of the occasion, the award of the best National Distributor went to Alhaji Idi Ankwa Entreprises; while Alhaji Muhammad Maikatifa and Sons 1st runners-up. Mr Benjamin Oti of Canopy Global Investment received the award for 2nd runners-up.



Caption: Chairman, Dr. Bamidele Makanjuola; Winner, Vitafoam's Second Best National Distributor, Alhaji Muhammad Makatifa of Makatifa and Sons, Best National Distributor, Alhaji Idi Ankwa Enterprises, Third Best, Mr. Benjamin Oti of Canopy Global Investment, Miss Chika Obi, Representative of V. Obi Limited and Vitafoam's Group Managing Director, Mr. Taiwo Adeniyi during the Vitafoam's National Distributor's Award.





VITAFOAM

HOLDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
**GROWS ANNUAL PROFIT
BY 224% TO N1.57BN**

Vitafoam Nigeria Plc has posted an after-tax profit of N1.57bn in 2019 as against N486.12m in the preceding year, an increase of 224 per cent.

The company also declared a cumulative dividend of N525.35m, an increase of 102 per cent over N260.52m in 2018, which translated to 42 kobo per share.

At the annual general meeting held in Lagos, our Chairman, Dr. Bamidele Makanjuola, said, "Our outstanding performance is not just because we utilised the loans we took from the Bank of Industry and other banks to create value for shareholders but ingenuity of the company's leadership.

"Vitafoam is blessed with level headed, innovative and passionate youths that form the core of our managers. The board also comprises wise elders who are always willing to assist the management."

Continuing, the Chairman said, "The

remarkable improvement in performance reflected the effectiveness of improved funding efficiency gains, and impact of the strategic initiatives implemented to address the protracted challenge of low margins in the business.

"The company leveraged the Bank of Industry's long-term loan facility and other flexible financing windows by negotiating better trade terms with foreign suppliers of raw materials, thereby sidestepping the middle men. The resulting reduction in the cost price of raw materials impacted positively on gross margin."

Shareholders commended the company's board and management for the performance, stressing the need to strengthen the subsidiaries in order to expand the company's revenue base.

STAKEHOLDERS' COCKTAIL



STAKEHOLDERS' COCKTAIL



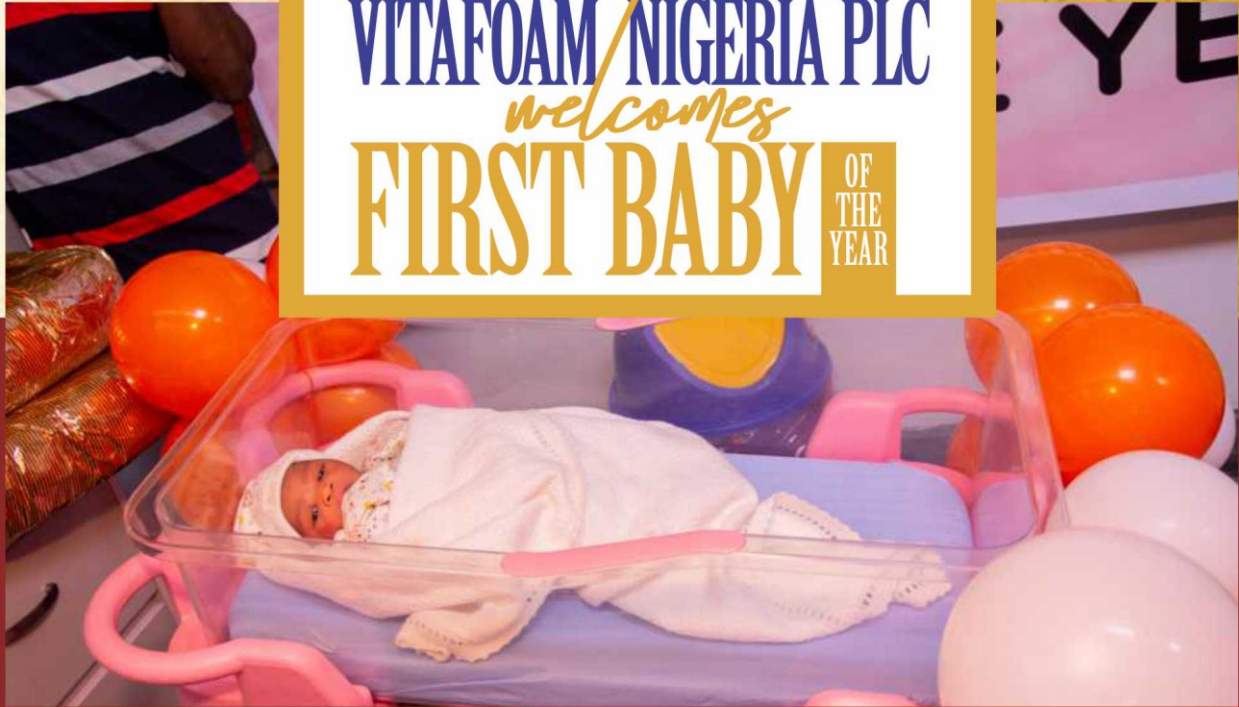
FACES AT THE AGM



FACES AT THE AGM



VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC *welcomes* FIRST BABY OF THE YEAR



The Lagos Island maternity hospital popularly called “the Lagos baby factory” went agog with activities on Wednesday, 1st January, 2020 when the management of Vitafoam Nig. Plc celebrated the birth of the first baby of the year, 2020 and equally rewarded the hospital management with needed materials.

The first baby of the year, a male child weighing 2.6kg was delivered by the family of Mr. and Mrs. Abdulyekeen Momoh at 12.09am, while the second baby was delivered by Mrs. Temitayo Ayangbola, at 12.14am with 2.5kg weight. The third baby was delivered at 8.09 am by Mrs Olatanwa Mukaila with a 3.7kg weight. The three babies and others delivered in the hospital on January 1 were given gifts by the firm.

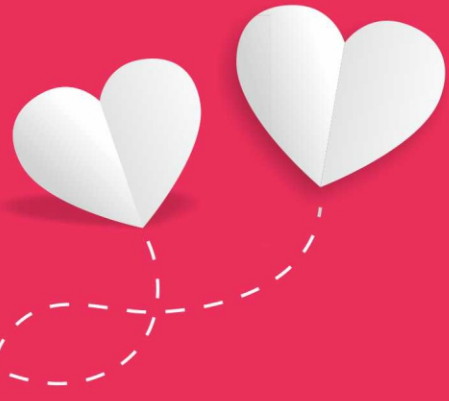
The Commercial Director, Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, Mr. Sola Owoade, said the gesture by the company was to give back to the society as part of its corporate social responsibility. He said, “If we leave everything to the Government, then, we will not achieve what we ought to. The little we can do as an organisation, we want to do it so that every other person can emulate it, that way, the society can be a better place for all of

us.” Baby cots, baby mattresses, changing mats, pillows and other baby products of different sizes and top quality, were given to the first three babies. The company also presented “Early days” range of Vitafoam products to other new mothers and babies in the ward. This was received with so much joy and appreciation as the name of the firm rang through the Maternity home.

The company did not stop at presenting gifts to the new mothers and babies, she also donated hospital beddings, bed sheets, pillows, and various products that can be used in the wards to the hospital management and staff. While receiving the hospital gifts, the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Olufemi Omololu, said although the State Government was doing a lot in the health sector, support from private sector partners was always welcome and very important. He expressed his delight saying, “When you see kindness being displayed, it is always a good thing. We’ve been doing this with Vitafoam for quite a number of years, because the beginning of a new year is the beginning of new births, although that happens in this hospital every day, there is something unique about the first day of the year.”



Valentine Campaign

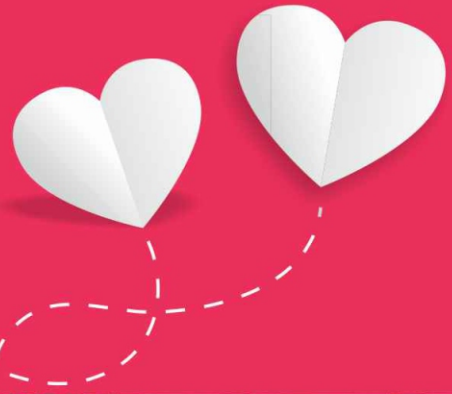


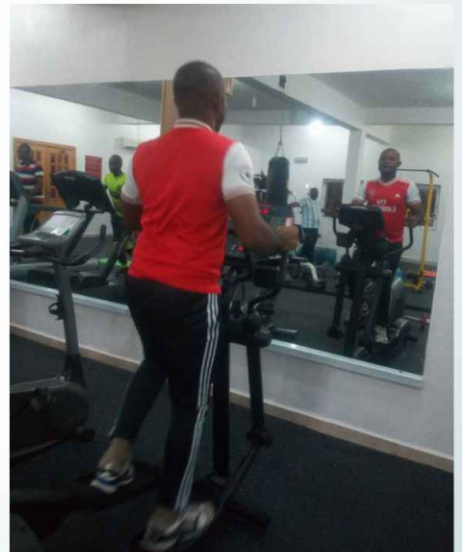
February 14th, St. Valentine's Day is a day of showing love, care, and affection to friends and families, characterized by sharing love gifts and presents. Vitafoam Nigeria Plc embarked on a campaign tagged #LoveSaves to celebrate the day.

Apaokagi Adedoyin Maryam a.k.a. Taooma, a comedienne and an online influencer was engaged by the company to give out Memory pillows as gifts to commemorate the Valentine day's celebration. She, alongside Vitafoam team, were at specific shopping malls where our products were sold, to hand over these pillows to lucky customers. The aim of the campaign was to show that the brand cares by bringing comfort to their doorsteps. The campaign was live streamed on all our social media platforms and pictures were taken also.



Valentine Campaign





MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



INTERVIEW

WITH MANAGING DIRECTOR, VITAFOAM SIERRA LEONE
ENGR. OLA OGUNFEYITIMI

Vitanews: How far has the journey been since Vitafoam (SL) was established?

Engr. O: The journey has been relatively smooth, though slow but with steady growth. Vitafoam SL Ltd was incorporated in 2008 in response to the call for private sector's participation in the development of the manufacturing sector in Sierra Leone.

We commenced commercial trading in 2010 with imported products from Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, thereby introducing high quality mattresses, soft fibre pillows and many other lifestyle products to the Sierra Leone market. These products were widely accepted by all but less competitive due to very high cost of freighting light-weight foam products and lack of dedicated vessels to move products across West Africa.

In 2012, we decided to set up a manufacturing plant in Sierra Leone to explore the market within the Mano River Union, targeting Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Against our plans to get the factory ready for operations within a year, we encountered some delays, nevertheless, manufacturing operations finally commenced in mid-2014. This was further affected by the outbreak of Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone thereby causing more setbacks to operations.

The factory current capacity stands at 600 pieces of mattresses, 3000 pieces of pillows and 400 bedsheets per 8-hour shift. And should there be a surge in demands, additional shifts can be introduced to fill the gaps.

Today, we currently trade from over 40 outlets across Sierra Leone with many institutional partners as compared to only 2 outlets in 2014.

In Sierra Leone, Vitafoam outlets are visible in strategic locations in Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Kono, Magburuka, Lunsar, Portloko, Kambia, Kabala, Kamakwe and more.

In 2016, the business exported to Guinea and Nigeria under the

ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)

Vitafoam has employed and trained over 80 direct and indirect employees since inception. Dedicated training of locals has been one of the cardinal programmes of the company. At the moment, all machines, even with high precision and computer interface are operated by Sierra Leoneans and this has engendered stability in our operations.

Sierra Leone market is a very unique one, with low purchasing power and small market. Stabilising our operations required holistic change of business strategies vis a vis trade channels and cost structure reviews, and dedicated marketing to create top of the mind awareness among our consumers.

Though the business has been faced with numerous challenges in the last 5 years of its manufacturing operations in Sierra Leone ranging from small market access, weak purchasing power to difficulties in exporting products to neighboring countries and so on, we have been able to weather the storm as the business continues to record steady growth and wider patronage within and outside the country.

Vitanews: You have enumerated the journey so far with some challenges. What is your current state of community relations and Safety at work place?

Engr. O: Our relationship with our host community is very cordial. Thanks to continuous engagement and support from The Hastings community. Vitafoam is a responsible corporate citizen with focus on environmentally friendly operations. We have implemented the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover) of waste management strategies with the recent installation and commissioning of a foam recycling plant thereby making Vitafoam the first company within the sub-region to achieve zero foam waste initiative with 100% recycling of foam wastes within the factory.

Our staff are all equipped with personal protective equipment and the factory is fortified with safety gears and fire prevention equipment (hose reels, fire extinguishers, auto sprinkler and fire hydrants) thereby making the company a safe and healthy place to work.

On community relations, we are supportive to various developmental projects of the community. For instance, we recently bankrolled the perimeter fencing of the cemetery in Hastings, along with other community engagements.





Entrance Gate to the Community Cemetery donated by Vitafoam Sierra Leone



Fencing of Community Cemetery by Vitafoam Sierra Leone



Layout of Fence Donated by Vitafoam SL Ltd.

Vitanews: Are your outlets manned by Vitafoam staff or out-sourced?

Engr. O: As said earlier, operating in Sierra Leone necessitated a holistic review of business strategies. For example, elsewhere, distributors are strong enough to purchase and trade in Vitafoam products with minimal support. Whereas in Sierra Leone, not all have the resources to buy our products cash and carry. So we introduced a retail model called Vitashop Scheme, where we train and partner with locals to open outlets, stock the outlet and engage in Sales on Return (SOR) business model where operators earn commission on goods sold out of the outlets. This scheme has sustained the business thus far and has created the opportunity to empower the locals and imbibe the entrepreneurial drive in willing partners to create sustainable wealth. The two major challenges of this scheme are the high cost of rent in Freetown and some operators' non-compliance to terms and conditions set by the company.



Vitafoam SL Outlet at Wilkinson Road, Freetown



Vitafoam SL Outlet at Percival Road, Freetown

Vitanews: We are aware that the Nigerian Ambassador to Sierra Leone visited the factory, Could you please tell us more about the visit?

Engr O: The Nigerian High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, Dr Habiss Ugbada recently visited Vitafoam in conjunction with The Board of Nigeria Chamber of Commerce in Sierra Leone. During his visit, the Ambassador expressed his satisfaction with the level of impact we have made within the manufacturing Sector in Sierra Leone which include jobs creation, staff training and skill transfer and introduction of quality mattresses to the market.

The Ambassador expressed his happiness and confirmed Vitafoam as one of the success stories as far as investment in the economy of Sierra Leone is concerned. He appreciated the level of investment, commitment to quality, and positive feedback on the relationship with the host community. He pledged his support for the business and advised in the areas of adding values to the locals and compliance to local laws and sustaining quality products that Vitafoam is known for.



Nigerian High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, Dr Habiss Ugbada and Members of the Nigeria Chamber of Commerce in Sierra Leone.



Factory tour with the Nigerian High Commissioner in Sierra Leone



Vitanews: What is the trade relations with government authorities like Ministry of Trade, major Agencies like NRA and Standards Bureau?

Engr. O: The relationship can be better. It is our firm believe that Public – Private Dialogue will improve relationship between the managers of economy and the private sector. It is one thing to woo investors and get them to invest in the country but another thing to show interest in their welfare and wellbeing. Government needs to harmonize the multiplicity of documentations to help facilitate trade.

Manufacturers in the country should be supported with creation of special FOREX window to enable them source needed FX at the Bank of Sierra Leone rates and not through the black market as it is presently the case. For us in Vitafoam, we have invested in people and machineries to remain competitive, however an enabling environment and incentivizing manufacturing will go a long way to get us to achieve our investment objectives. Recent steps taken by The Ministry of Trade and Industry to harmonise agencies performing overlapping functions and the reduction in destination inspection fee on imported raw materials are steps in the right direction.

I strongly believe that if manufacturers are supported with needed infrastructure and policies to motivate and encourage them, contributions to GDP from manufacturing activities will grow from current single digit of 2% to double digits.

Vitanews: With all these burning challenges you have highlighted, what's the immediate and long term future of Vitafoam in the Sierra Leone manufacturing sector?

Engr. O: In Africa, West Africa in particular, it's not easy to run a manufacturing business as we are usually confronted with a lot of headwind and uncertainties. However, our strategy is working, our business is steadily growing and our products have been accepted regionally. The challenges highlighted are not unique to Sierra Leone. Our training encourages us to continuously think out of the box to proffer solution to identified challenges. With continuous engagement, we are hopeful that the challenges with exports into neighboring countries under the ETLS scheme and soon to be implemented Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) are surmountable.

The future is bright and prospects for Vitafoam business in Sierra Leone is promising



Recycling Plant



Delivery Trucks at the Loading Bay Area



Foam Block Store/Curing Room

Sales Conference





Sales Conference



VITAPUR

EMBARKS ON THE PROJECT TO GET
AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM CERTIFICATION



Adeyemi Mofikoya - General Manager

In a drive to cement its position as the number one rigid polyurethane manufacturer in Nigeria, Vitapur has decided to implement an Integrated Management system (IMS). The span of Vitapur's ambition is matched only by the scope of its aspirational IMS which comprises of the ISO 9001:2015 (Quality), ISO 14001:2015 (Environment) & ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational health and safety) standards. The three standards share many common elements that if effectively integrated will stimulate business improvement and risk reduction in order to allow for business objectives to be achieved.

An integrated management system is a single system designed to manage multiple aspects of an organization's operations in line with multiple standards, such as those for quality, environmental as well as occupational health and safety.

The intended Outcomes of an integrated management system based on ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 are;

- Enhancement of quality, environmental and OH&S performances through customer satisfaction
- Meeting the requirements of regulatory bodies and the community at large.
- Providing a safe and healthy work place.
- Achieving the quality, environmental and OH & S integrated management system objectives.



Department representatives for the
implementation course training



The IMS Awareness Session for the Vitapur Team



C VID-19

PANDEMIC RELIEF

In the light of the pandemic ravaging the world, Vitafoam as a responsible corporate organization also played her part in fighting the spread of corona virus. A hundred units of mattresses and pillows were given out to the isolation centres through the Lagos State Government.

Excursion & CSR



Solid Heritage School Ojodu, Lagos



JNISSI Nur. & Pry. School, Ogba Lagos



JNISSI Nur. & Pry. School, Ogba Lagos





Occupational Health Nursing Sch. UCH, Ibadan



Occupational Health Nursing Sch. UCH, Ibadan



National Open University Students



National Open University Students



Nigeria Society of Engineers, Unilag Student Chapter



Nigeria Society of Engineers, Unilag Student Chapter

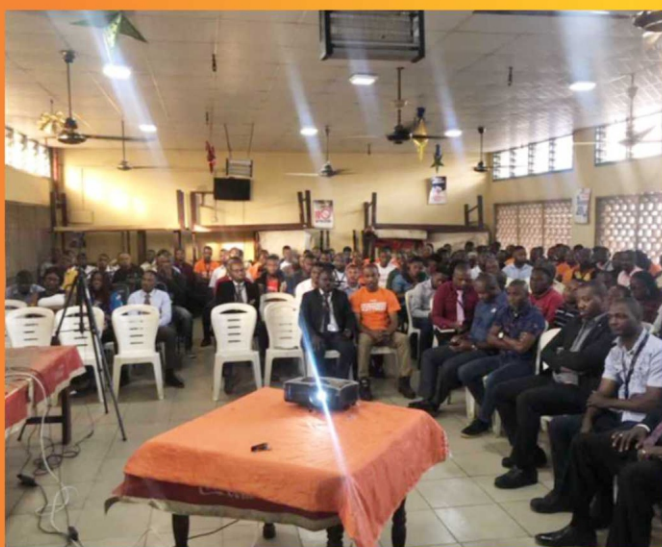


TOWN HALL

meetings



TOWN HALL *meetings*





PIONEER STAFF AND STUDENTS OF **ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT** OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN VISIT VITAPUR

Vitapur Nigeria Limited threw open its factory door to the Pioneer Staff and Students of Architecture Department of University of Ibadan on Tuesday 3rd March 2020. The Architecture Department team was led by the Head of Department (HOD), Dr. T.O Odeyale. The team comprised twenty one (21) students and three (3) members of staff of the Department.

Upon arrival in the factory, the Head of Department (HOD) and other staff members paid a courtesy visit to the General Manager of the company, Engr. Adeyemi Mofikoya. Engr. Kehinde Akintayo (Technical Manager) and Mr. Alhassan Yusuf (Production and Planning Manager) conducted the visiting team round Vitapur Nigeria Limited Production, Fabrication and Chemical Blending Factory.

The Architecture Department team showed great appreciation for the warm reception offered by the management of Vitapur Nigeria Limited. The team commended the management for offering a rare blend of building material with unique properties. The team was very impressed with the thermal insulating impact Vitapur's Products can offer when they visited the roof insulation in the systems house and cool ambiance of the Prefab clinic. The team was later offered light refreshments before departing for Ibadan.



Courtesy Visit on the General Manager
by the Staff of University of Ibadan
Department of Architecture



Engr. Kehinde Akintayo addressing the visiting
Staff and Students of University of Ibadan
Department of Architecture



Engr. Alhassan Yusuf addressing the visiting Staff
and Students of University of Ibadan
Department of Architecture



The annual World Sleep Day themed '**Better Sleep, Better Life, Better Planet**' held on the 13th of March, 2020 at our Head Office. The occasion was flagged off by the Group Managing Director, Mr. Taiwo Adeniyi, who gave his opening speech welcoming everyone to the event. The Keynote Speaker, Mrs. Modupe Adesanya lectured participants on the

importance of sleep to our lives, Nigeria and the planet as a whole. The event was concluded with an exhibition right in front of the premises.

**WORLD
SLEEP DAY**

WORLD SLEEP DAY



WORLD SLEEP DAY





GIRLS' SAFETY INITIATIVE

There is a growing trend of insecurity all over, but the most worrisome is the situation of the girl child. It is therefore very important that we do all we can, to protect her. Every little girl you see out there is a prospective wife, and a future mother. So, inside that little body resides the future of humanity. Let us make the world safer for her; it is also for us all.

Let's take note of the following safety precautions for the girl child, against sexual abuse, which is the most worrisome aspect of the insecurity.

1. Do not let your girl child get too familiar with male neighbours and visitors.
2. Discourage her visit to male apartments alone. This includes running errands that entail entering their rooms. Also, be careful how you release your girl to go and visit her 'friends' and 'classmates'. Criminals know how to set traps.
3. Let her not be fond of receiving, or requesting for gifts from people especially males. It is by this that a trap is arranged.
4. As much as possible, avoid leaving your girl child alone at home.
5. Regularly chat with your girl child. This is when you ask her of any touching of her private part by any male.
6. Notice the change of mood of your girl, or the way she walks. Has she been withdrawing? Is she afraid? Rapists threaten children with danger or death should they tell anybody what happened to them.
7. On a daily basis, examine your girl's private part to see any possible tampering. Also check her underwear to see any blood stains.
8. In the midst of male relatives, especially half-brothers, let her always go to bed in shorts as part her night dress. Is it not strange that some rapists are blood relatives?
9. Try and change your style of purchases. Why will you send your

little girl out of the house late in the evening in search of an item, all alone?

10. When you hear an unusual cry or shout of a girl, please be alerted and make efforts to see what the matter is. You could be a girl's last hope for rescue.

11. Every raped girl could have a reduced chances of reproduction and that is a generation closed down.

12. Please, properly examine and background-check that house girl you want to hire, to ensure she is really a girl. Some males who resemble females take advantage of that, disguise as girls and get hired as house helps. The safety of your daughters in the hand of this 'girl' is left to your imagination.

13. Very importantly, parents should desist from introducing the girl child to wild, provocative dressing. Mothers are fond of dressing up their little

girls in skimpy, scanty attire: shorts, show back, see-through, mini, etc., thereby setting the stage for attacks. The usual justification is "but they are just little children". We forget that childhood is the time to lay the foundation of whatever a child will be, at adulthood. Whatever will be your child's dress code when she grows up; you're laying the foundation right now. Please lay the foundation of a decent, responsible dressing.

14. Discourage neighbours and relatives from referring to your girl child as 'my wife' because it creates an opportunity to draw the girl closer and most are for ulterior motives.

FOR OLDER GIRLS

1. Avoid being alone in lonely place.
2. Avoiding visiting males alone.
3. Do not take a drink that is opened and served in your absence. A drug can be dropped into your drink.
4. Do not accept an invitation to a strange place; a trap could be waiting for you.
5. If a friend calls to invite you to any place which two of you did not discuss, politely decline. Many girls have been invited to places even by 'friends' where they were raped, and even murdered. Be wise.
6. Let shorts be part of your dressing. Preferably jeans trousers are no more for fashion alone; they're now security outfits.
7. Pick some lessons in self-defense. When it matters most, your shout for help may not do much; but you can ward off attackers, physically.
8. Avoid drawing attention unnecessarily; and flamboyant dressing does that for you.
9. Before you board a cab, observe the occupants. If they're all males, gently decline.

Birthday

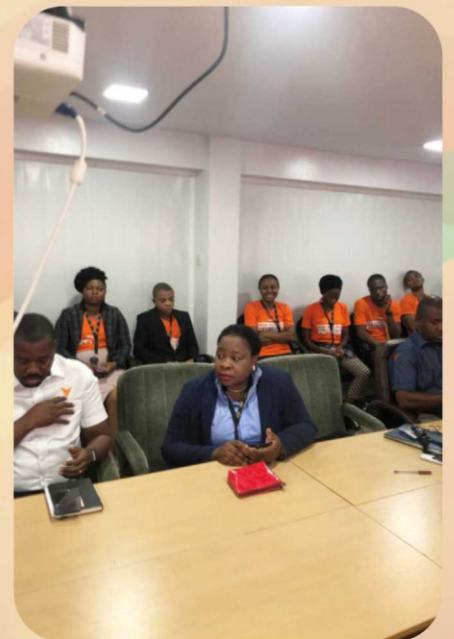
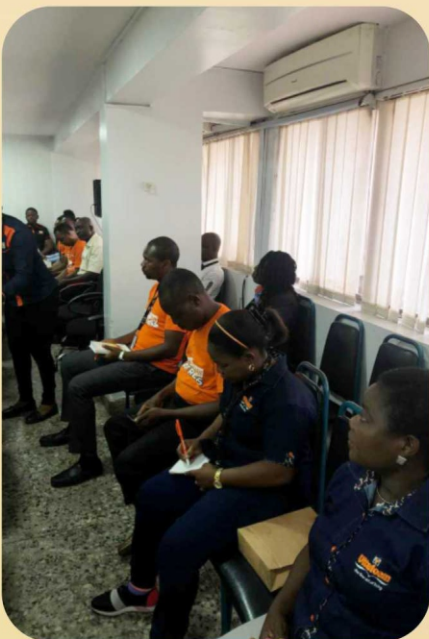
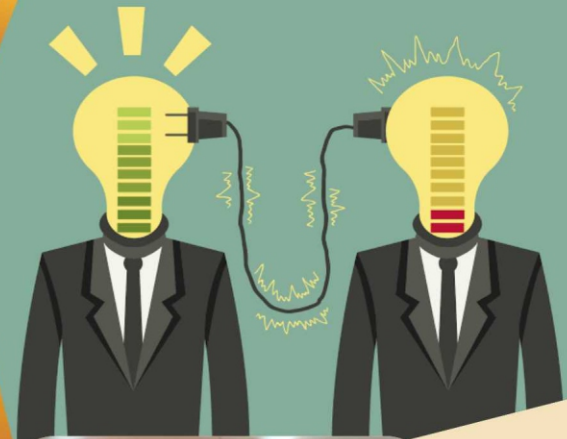
& EVENTS






Birthday

Knowledge SHARING







7 FACTS

YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DEPRESSION

Depression is a very real and treatable illness. But myths, misunderstandings, and stigma continue to be barriers to treatment for many, and the consequences of untreated depression can be life-threatening. Understanding the facts about depression, on the other hand, can save lives. Here are seven things everyone should know about depression and depressive disorders.

1. Depression Doesn't Always Have a "Good" Reason

Sometimes people become depressed for what seems like a "good" reason—maybe they lost their job or a close friend passed away—but with clinical depression, there doesn't necessarily have to be a reason for how you feel. The chemicals in the brain that are responsible for mood control may be out of balance causing you to feel bad even though everything in your life is going well.

2. There Are Many Things That Can Cause Depression

The causes of depression aren't completely understood, but it is believed that the best explanation for it is that it is probably caused by a combination of factors, such as an underlying genetic tendency towards the condition and certain environmental factors that can act as triggers.

Having a parent and grandparent with depression increases the risk of depression, suggesting that genetics plays a big role. The rates of depression are also higher among those who have a history of substance use. Other factors linked to depression include **brain chemistry imbalances, hormones, seasonal changes, stress, and trauma.**

Brain Chemistry Imbalances

Depression has been linked to an imbalance in the neurotransmitters that impact mood regulation. This includes dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine. The theory is that having too much or too little of these neurotransmitters can cause (or contribute to) depression.

Hormones

Any flux in the production or function of hormones—for example, pregnancy, menstruation, menopause, or thyroid issues—could contribute to depression.

Seasonal Changes

Major depressive disorder with seasonal patterns (seasonal affective disorder) is triggered by disruptions in the circadian rhythm of the body. A change in seasons can also disrupt sleep, which can contribute to a depressed mood.

Stress and Trauma

The loss of a loved one, trauma and abuse, chronic stress, and big life changes (such as a divorce or losing a job) can trigger depression. Researchers blame this on the high levels of the hormone cortisol that are secreted during these stressful, traumatic times. ☐ Cortisol affects the neurotransmitter serotonin and can trigger depression.

3. Depression Is More Than Ordinary Sadness

Sadness is a part of being human, a natural reaction to painful circumstances. All of us will experience sadness at some point in our lives. Depression, however, is an illness with many more symptoms than an unhappy mood.

When sadness turns into depression, there are some telltale signs, including:

- Persistent feelings of sadness or an "empty" mood
- Feeling irritable and restless
- Feeling anxious, hopeless, or helpless
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Decreased sex drive
- Low energy or feelings of fatigue
- Trouble with concentration, memory, and decision-making
- Changes in appetite, weight, and sleep patterns
- Physical symptoms (such as headaches, digestive issues, body aches, and pain) that don't subside with treatment.

Unfortunately, you can't just snap yourself out of depression. If you recognize these signs, seek help from a mental health professional.

4. Children Are Not Immune to Depression

A myth exists that says childhood is always a joyful, carefree time in our lives. While children don't experience the same problems that adults do, like work-related stress or financial pressures, this doesn't mean that they can't become depressed. Childhood brings its own unique set of stresses, such as bullying and the struggle for peer

acceptance.

5. Depression Is a Real Illness

You are not weak or crazy. Depression is a real illness that researchers believe is caused mainly by imbalances in certain chemicals within your brain called neurotransmitters. Some experts are even starting to frame depression as a systemic disease.

The following neurotransmitters play an important role in regulating your mood as well as being involved in many other functions throughout your body:

- **Norepinephrine:** What makes your heart rate and blood pressure soar during a "fight or flight" response or stressful time
- **Serotonin:** The "feel-good" chemical that helps regulate your mood and plays a role in your overall sense of well-being
- **Dopamine:** Helps regulate emotion, memory, thinking, motivation, and reward

Researchers are continuing to learn more about what causes these imbalances as well as other neurotransmitters like acetylcholine, GABA, and glutamate^{2,22} which may also play a role in depression.

6. Depression Is Treatable

There are several very effective treatment options available for depression, including medications and psychotherapy. In addition, there are new treatments being developed all the time that are proving to be effective in cases where other treatments have failed.

While your treatment should be tailored to best suit your symptoms and overall health, a combination of medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes is often used to help alleviate symptoms of depression.

Therapy

Depending on your unique situations, you may participate in individual, group, family or couples psychotherapy. While there are many types of therapeutic approaches, the following have been study-proven to treat depression:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Interpersonal therapy
- Social skills therapy
- Psychodynamic therapy
- Supportive counseling
- Behavioral activation
- Problem-solving therapy

Medications

Especially when used in conjunction with psychotherapy, there are many medications that have been found effective in the treatment of depression. Again, since depression treatment is not a one-size-fits-all approach, it may take some trial and error to find the medication that alleviates your symptoms with the fewest side effects.

Lifestyle Changes

In addition to therapy and medication, there are some lifestyle changes that can help you better manage symptoms of depression as well as medication side effects. Here are a

few areas to focus on, but first consult your mental health professional to find out if they are right for you.

- **Diet:** There's no cure-all diet for depression, but there are certain foods that you can eat (and avoid) that play a role in mood and emotion regulation. For example, processed foods, alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and refined grains can hijack your mental health while whole foods like fruits and vegetables, fish, turkey, chicken, beans, nuts, and seeds can provide mood-boosting benefits.
- **Exercise:** A good workout can lift your mood, increase your ability to handle stress, and reduce symptoms of depression, especially when combined with conventional medication and cognitive behavioral therapy. Of course, the type of exercise you do depends on your fitness level, overall health, and personal likes. Your routine can include cardiovascular and aerobic exercise (such as jogging, swimming, cycling, brisk walking, elliptical trainer) and well as other types of mind-body exercise like yoga and tai chi.
- **Stress management:** Stress can be a cause of depression and it can also make the symptoms of your depression feel more intense. Either way, it's beneficial to keep stress under control. Long-term habits like good nutrition, regular exercise, proper sleep, and meditation can help build your resilience to stress. Incorporating a few stress management techniques into your day is also helpful; the key is finding the ones that work for you. Joining a support group or talking to a mental health professional can also give you ideas to better manage stress.

7. Untreated Depression Is the Most Common Cause of Suicide

The proper diagnosis and treatment of depression is very important in preventing suicides. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 45% of those who commit suicide are suffering from some sort of mental illness. And this includes people with undiagnosed, untreated, or under-treated depression.

What to Do If You or Someone You Love Has Depression

If you or someone you love is showing signs of depression, you may wonder what steps to take. You may want to begin by learning more about depression, including symptoms and treatment as well as myths, misunderstandings, and stigma. This can provide a better picture of what to expect and make you a more well-informed patient or caregiver.

You should also set an appointment with your primary care physician who will give a physical exam, run any blood tests to rule out any medical conditions that mimic depression, and provide a reference to a mental health professional for further treatment. During the visit, you can also ask for some recommendations of reputable sources of information and support.

Article Credit: Verywell Mind

Jokes

DYING OF CANCER

A man is dying of Cancer. His son asked him: "Dad, why do you keep telling people you're dying of AIDS?" Dad answered: "So when I'm dead no one will dare touch your mom!"

DINNER

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

GRANDPA AND GRAND SON

Grandpa said to Grandson: "See your teacher is coming, go and hide because you missed school today". Grandson replied: "I took an excuse that you are dead, so na you go go hide"!

JONAH & TEACHER

Teacher: Why are you late?
Jonah: There was a man who lost N1,000 note.
Teacher: That's nice, were you helping him look for it?
Jonah: No, I was standing on it.

FATHER OF SIX

A man had six children and was very proud of his achievement. He was so proud of himself that he started calling his wife, 'Mother of Six', in spite of her objections. One night they went to a party. He decided that it was time to go home, and wanted to find out if his wife was ready to leave as well. He shouted at the top of his voice, "Shall we go home, Mother of Six?" His wife, irritated by her husband's lack of discretion shouted back, "Anytime you're ready, Father of Four!"

JEALOUS HUSBAND

Husband comes home late at night and quietly opens the door to his Bedroom. From under the blanket he sees four legs instead of two. He reaches for a Baseball Bat and starts hitting the blanket as hard as he can. Once he's done, he goes to the kitchen to have a drink. As he enters, he sees his wife there, reading a magazine. "Hi Darling", she says, "Your parents have come to visit us, so I let them stay in our bedroom. Hope you have said Hello?"

NEPA

My little nephew just arrived Nigeria from England. He was playing his video game about 9pm when NEPA took the light. The boy just shouted: "Mum help me, I'm blind, I'm blind". In my mind, I said... "You never see anything yet. By the time we put on Generator, you will become deaf".



HOSPITAL FURNITURE



Overhead Table



Bed Side Cabinet



Hospital Examination bed



Drip Stand

Contact Us:

Tel: 07052100000, 08129982143, 08174589640, 0800-VITAFOAM (080084823626- TOLL FREE LINE)

Email or visit: response.centre@vitafoam.com.ng website: www.vitafoamng.com

www.facebook.com/Vitafoamng twitter.com/VitafoamNG



COX BENCH

COX BENCH

Bring elegant style and an extra sitting space to your room with this beautiful bedroom bench that comes with wide firm legs for a better poised look. It features an individual head balance with padded upholstery for extra comfort. It is sleek, trendy, easily movable, fashionable and serves as a footrest too.

VITAFOAM HEAD OFFICE

Oba Akran Avenue, Industrial Estate, PMB 21092, Ikeja, Lagos State.

VITAFOAM RESPONSE CENTRE

Call: 0705 210 0000, 01-741 9073 - 4, 0800VITAFOAM (080084823626) -TOLL FREE LINE

Email or visit: response.centre@vitafoam.com.ng, www.vitafoamng.com

www.facebook.com/Vitafoamng twitter.com/VitafoamNG

**MUCH MORE
THAN MATTRESS**


Vitafoam
-the fine art of living