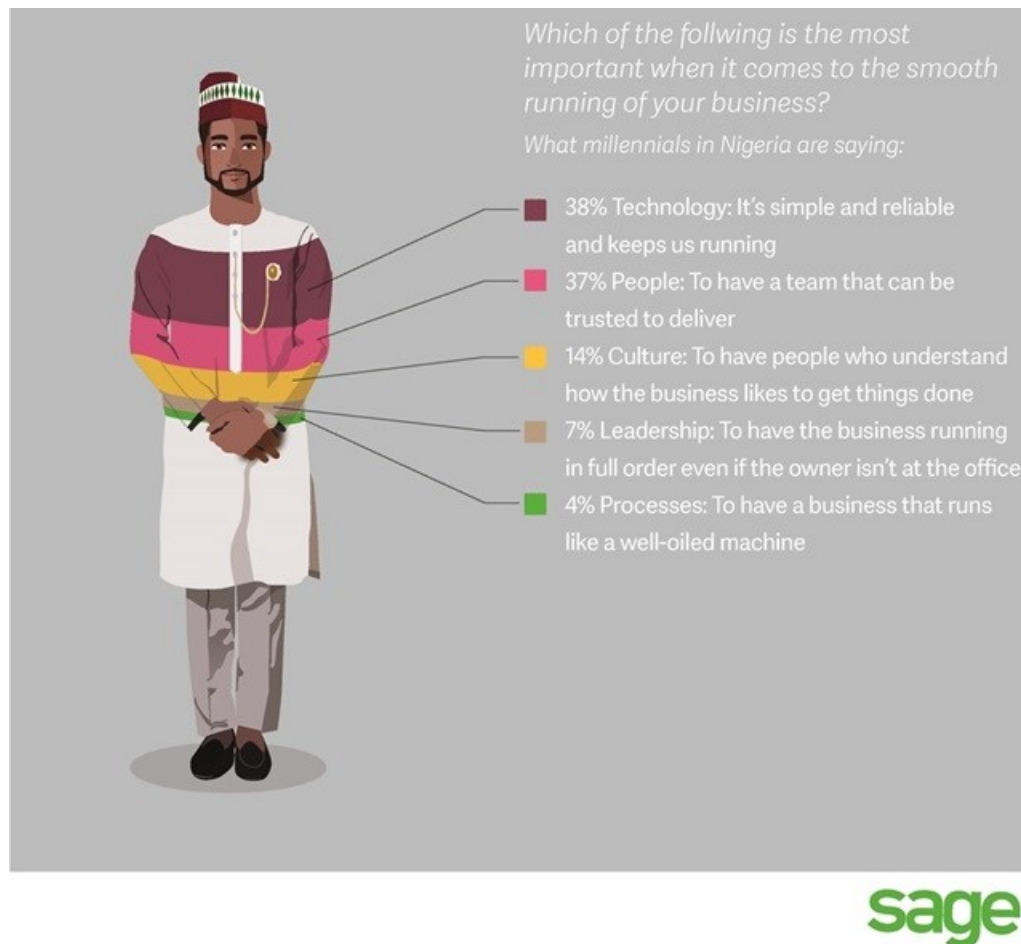


The love affair between young Nigerians and disruptive mobile technology

By [Magnus Nmonwu](#)

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We are all familiar with the stereotype of the young entrepreneur: technology whizz kids with all the latest mobile devices and the ability to multitask as they type hundreds of words a minute. Sage's 'Walk With Me' report confirms that there is plenty of truth in this picture of how young people work and interact with technology.



The ['Walk With Me'](#) report examined the key characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of young entrepreneurs around the world.

What's more, our research in Nigeria and 15 other countries shows that we are just at the beginning of a major shift in how businesses are run as the young entrepreneurs make their presence felt. Mobile technology has already made us all much more productive and helped companies of all sizes to reduce costs and become more efficient, but most young entrepreneurs see plenty of opportunities to do even much more with the tools and apps available at their disposal.

Some of the most interesting local findings on Nigerian young entrepreneurs include:

- 96% say that they still feel the same excitement about their business as they did when they first started it.
- 44% say they will start over five businesses in their lifetime.
- 42% say they would have still been able to run their business with the technology available 20 years ago.
- 38% say they socialise with their team once a month.
- 29% say that work comes before life.

- 16% say that they get out of bed in the morning because they want to make a difference in the world and do some social good.

Mobile devices are the platform of choice for today's entrepreneur and, as you might expect from a generation that has been mobile literate from an extremely young age, a large proportion place huge emphasis on technology and are keen to be at the forefront of new trends. Young Nigerians are mobile-first people, so that's no surprise at all.

Dion Chang, founder of Flux Trends has done a lot of work with organisations in South Africa that are looking to change the way they operate to better accommodate millennial entrepreneurs. The changes can seem daunting to big corporates, he says, because in many ways the new social values of this generation mean throwing out practices we've relied on for decades – a nine to five work day, and the traditional desk work space, for example.

Oiling the wheels of a smooth business

More than a third of young entrepreneurs (38% in Nigeria) say the technology they use is the most important element when it comes to the smooth running of their business; they couldn't prosper without it. 42% say they could probably not have run their business with the technology available 20 years ago. That's an incredible stat: far from destroying jobs through automation, technology is inspiring young people to create businesses that could not have existed in the past.

When it comes to networking and new business, nearly 70% of Nigerian respondents say that they use technology rather than a face-to-face approach. Some 39% say that they depend on technology to succeed, while 44% say technology is invaluable in helping them market their business. These are numbers that would no doubt increase if we had to repeat this survey in five years' time. Put simply, we're seeing technology being woven into the very fabric of today's businesses.

It's also interesting to note how confident Nigerians are about their mastery of technology. About 80% of young entrepreneurs in Nigeria claim that despite technology constantly evolving, they do not worry about whether they will be able to keep up. Most Nigerians (80%) also say they do not worry about whether they will be able to afford the latest technology.

Will your desk be defunct?

Looking to the future, in the next 10 years, 33% of Nigerians surveyed believe that technology will make the concept of 'your desk' defunct and that, in future, everyone will work remotely and flexibly, via a mobile device. Additionally, 45% agreed the workplace will have more virtual staff, working remotely and flexibly, while 23% said that they will save money on office space and overheads.

It's intriguing to hear how young entrepreneurs are already transforming their businesses with technology, and how they expect to see the landscape keep evolving in the years to come. What we hear very clearly from our research is that young entrepreneurs in Nigeria and the rest of the world greatly value flexibility and want to have freedom over when, where and how they work, as well as with who.

For them, technology is not only a means to boosting efficiency and productivity; it is also a way to achieve the flexibility and work-life balance that they value so much. The future is mobile...

Entrepreneurs who understand the ‘giving economy’

Sage’s research showed that millennial entrepreneurs are far more focused on creating businesses that ‘give back’ to local communities and the world. At the recent Sage Summit in Chicago, the largest event for Small and Medium Businesses in the world, Zooey Deschanel and Gwyneth Paltrow spoke about the ‘Giving Economy’ and the idea that today’s consumer want more than products that will better their lives – they want to support companies that are socially conscious.

For big, established companies, this is also an important insight into how they can inspire their employees as well as their customers by having a positive influence on the community they serve.

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