

South-South Series:

Empowering and Growing Women-led Business



HIGHLIGHTS

Session n°2: Strategies for effective marketing and branding

Wednesday 9 April 2025

About the collaboration UN Women and COLEAD

The collaboration between UN Women and COLEAD focuses on empowering women entrepreneurs in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and beyond. The South-South Series is specifically designed for women entrepreneurs and business leaders, providing a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, skill enhancement, market access, and networking opportunities.

Coordination team for these series: For UN Women: Gayle Gollop, Alonso Bobes. For COLEAD: Isolina Boto, Nina Desanlis-Perrin, Ahoefa Soklou.

Session n°2: Strategies for effective marketing and branding

The second session of the South-South Series was focused on **strategies for effective marketing and branding**. The session held on the 9th of April 2025 was a success! The session attracted a great interest from all regions in the world: **607 participants from various continents registered** and accessed all information and recordings.

Opened by Isolina Boto, Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD the session three accomplished women entrepreneurs in the agrifood sector from Africa and the Caribbean. They shared insights into their businesses, their entrepreneurial journeys and presented their strategies for effective marketing and branding. The interactive Q&A session was moderated by Nina Desanlis-Perrin, Project Officer at COLEAD's Networks and Alliances team, fostering an engaging dialogue between participants and speakers and Alonso Bobes, Women's Economic Empowerment Associate at UN Women Caribbean, closed the session by outlining the next steps and opportunities for continued collaboration.

Meet our women entrepreneurs



Chigozie Bashua,
The Nut Place,
Nigeria



Felizia Frazier,
Mangra Studios,
The Bahamas



Rachel Renie,
D'Market Movers Group,
Trinidad & Tobago



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Chigozie Bashua, The Nut Place, Nigeria

Chigozie Bashua is a highly accomplished and visionary entrepreneur and Business Strategist with a remarkable 15 years' experience in diverse emerging markets across the spectrum of Information Technology and 8 years entrepreneurial experience. With a strong expertise in business analysis, service delivery management, business planning and strategy, Chigozie has consistently led impactful projects in these areas. Additionally, her proficiency extends to business continuity and risk assessment, where she has demonstrated exceptional acumen. She is the Founder of The Nut Place, a food innovation company creating gluten-free, nutrient-dense nut-based products that promote healthier lifestyles and sustainability. She is an esteemed alumna of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, The African Women Entrepreneurship Cooperative, an initiative of the Center for Global Enterprise in the United States of America, AWP Network, Impact Hub Lagos and Women Entrepreneurship for Africa, implemented by SAFEEM of The Seedstars Group, Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, Google Hustle Academy and a 2023 Vital Voices Grow Fellow. Additionally, she actively contributes as a mentor at the Tony Elumelu Foundation and the Lagos State Educational Trust Fund. She is also the Chief Business Strategist at CB Business Hub, where she helps entrepreneurs craft strategic business plans for growth.

Chigozie highlighted the importance of staying true to one's **core values and long-term vision**. At The Nut Place, sustainability has been a guiding principle from the very beginning. Despite the challenges associated with implementing sustainable practices—especially in resource-constrained environments—she emphasized that progress is possible through consistent, incremental steps. She also underscored the value of **actively seeking feedback from customers**. For her, listening to consumer input has been crucial for continuous improvement—not just in product quality, but also in packaging and branding. By keeping communication channels open and being receptive to suggestions, The Nut Place has been able to refine its offerings and strengthen its relationship with its customer base. Chigozie's insights served as a reminder that **building a resilient and impactful business requires both patience and a willingness to evolve**, all while holding firm to your foundational principles.

Rachel Renie, D'Market Movers, Trinidad and Tobago

Co-Founder & Managing Director of D'Market Movers, Rachel Renie has worked since 2009, closely with over 250 farmers and artisans to transform the local food supply chain, using digital platforms to bridge the gap between producers and consumers. Under her leadership, D'Market Movers has pioneered innovative solutions in food distribution, including market-driven insights for farmers and the introduction of a Click & Collect store to adapt to evolving consumer needs. Beyond food logistics, Rachel is the founder of Farm & Function TT, which processes and exports frozen Caribbean fruits, and Market Movers Design, which supports agripreneurs in branding and market development. Recognized as a 2025 Anthony N. Sabga Laureate for Entrepreneurship, she is passionate about sustainability, branding, and leveraging digital strategies to create impactful businesses.

Rachel demonstrated how **e-commerce platforms like D'Market Movers are transforming access to markets—especially for women entrepreneurs**. By enabling the online sale of products and services, these platforms break down traditional barriers and open up entirely new opportunities both locally and globally. She emphasized that digital commerce—through tools like user-friendly websites, mobile payment systems, and delivery integrations—**removes many of the geographic and logistical limitations** that have historically constrained small businesses. For women entrepreneurs in particular, who often face additional social and structural challenges, e-commerce offers a powerful pathway to **scale their businesses, reach broader audiences, and build greater financial independence**. Rachel's example reinforced the idea that **technology is not just a tool, but a catalyst** for inclusive growth and economic empowerment.

Felicia Frazier, Mangra Studios, Bahamas

Felicia Frazier is a creative influencer and STEM entrepreneur. As the CEO of Mangra Studios, a brand communications and content marketing firm, Felicia has made a name for herself in the industry by

providing services such as web development, marketing, and media production to notable clients such as the Office of the Prime Minister (the Bahamas), Subway (Freeport), and Disney. Felicia graduated from the College of the Bahamas (now the University of the Bahamas) in 2016 with an AA in Law and Criminal Justice, and prior to starting her entrepreneurial journey, she worked as a full-stack developer at an American Bahamian trading firm. In April 2019, Felicia quit her job to start Mangra Studios, and since then, the company has grown to great heights. One of Felicia's proudest accomplishments is the launch of MangraTv, an entertainment video platform showcasing Bahamian culture and creativity through video production, which has reached over 279.7k people and had 414.4k video views as of February 2022. In January 2022, Felicia started a small business initiative called Better at Business, offering free masterclass webinars to entrepreneurs to help them improve their businesses, with their first event having over 300 attendees (live and post-event).

Felicia illustrated that going viral is not just luck—it's an art. In today's digital age, **social media is the main stage**, and she encouraged entrepreneurs—especially women—to step confidently into the spotlight and truly own it.

She stressed the importance of **building a distinct personal and brand identity**, noting that what captures attention online is often content that is bold, authentic, and “screenshot-worthy.” According to Felicia, visibility matters: “Stop hiding behind your brand—**put yourself out there, tell your story, and let people connect with the face behind the business.**” Beyond content creation, Felicia also emphasized the importance of **continuous learning and self-investment**. Even with years of entrepreneurial experience, she shared that she is constantly evolving, staying updated with trends, and seeking out training opportunities to sharpen her skills. Her message to fellow entrepreneurs was clear: **don't wait for perfection—start now, stay visible, and never stop learning.**

Key highlights

Women entrepreneurs play a vital role in driving economic growth, innovation, and social change, yet they face unique challenges in marketing and branding due to gender biases, limited access to resources, and underrepresentation. These challenges impact their visibility, credibility, and ability to compete in male-dominated markets. Key challenges identified included limited access to funding and professional marketing services, difficulties navigating digital marketing tools and trends, underrepresentation in industry networks and events, and the persistence of gender-related stereotypes that influence consumer perceptions.

Despite these obstacles, our entrepreneurs have successfully overcome many of them by maintaining a positive and proactive attitude and by continuously enhancing the professional skills needed to grow their businesses. While time and resources are required, there is a wealth of free information available online, within networks and peer groups, and through support from development partners such as COLEAD, UN Women, and others.

All participants emphasized that **understanding customer needs is essential**. This involves staying up to date with market trends, accessing or commissioning research where possible, and collecting client feedback—even from a small customer base. Ensuring customer satisfaction remains one of the most effective ways to adapt and refine offerings, as word-of-mouth marketing can lead to new business opportunities. Many successful companies actively encourage satisfied customers to share their experiences—whether on social media or within their personal networks.

Building a strong brand identity that clearly communicates both personal and societal values—such as sustainability and empowerment—also requires **authentic storytelling**. This helps create a meaningful connection with customers and differentiates the brand in a competitive market.

Investing in targeted training and mentorship programs to strengthen branding and marketing skills is essential for business growth and long-term success. These programs can equip entrepreneurs with practical tools, strategic insights, and up-to-date knowledge needed to navigate an ever-evolving market landscape. At the same time, a wealth of valuable information and resources is freely available online—

through webinars, podcasts, industry blogs, and open-access courses—as well as within entrepreneurial networks and communities to enhance **content marketing**. However, taking full advantage of these opportunities requires a proactive mindset, curiosity, and a commitment to continuous learning.

By actively seeking out **knowledge and mentorship**, women entrepreneurs can stay ahead of emerging trends, refine their branding strategies, and lay the groundwork for sustainable, high-impact enterprises. Engaging in strategic partnerships, participating in business events, and joining women-led networks not only fosters shared growth but also opens doors to new insights, best practices, and collaborative learning opportunities.

For women entrepreneurs, developing strong **digital marketing skills** is not just an option—it's a strategic advantage. In today's highly connected world, digital platforms offer cost-effective, scalable tools that can significantly boost visibility, customer engagement, and business growth. Leveraging tools like social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and e-commerce enables women-led businesses to reach wider audiences without the need for large marketing budgets. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok allow entrepreneurs to tell their brand story, showcase products or services, and interact directly with their target audiences on a modest budget. These channels are also valuable for building community and generating customer feedback.

The panelists highlighted several sources of **funding** available to entrepreneurs and recommended actively monitoring grants and financial support initiatives offered by various development partners.

The South-South Series highlights the urgent need for sustained efforts in addressing gender disparities in entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs must be equipped with the necessary resources, skills, and networks to succeed in competitive markets. **Empowering women entrepreneurs through effective marketing and branding not only enhances business success but also promotes gender equality and inclusivity**. By embracing digital tools, authentic storytelling, and collaborative networks, women can build impactful brands that connect deeply with audiences and thrive in the global economy.

Recording of the session:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQWK6taXbRU&list=PLV5hWpGiR94OwWlfhb-X6vg_fyzwS7zkv&index=3

Marketing and branding related glossary¹

Brand

A brand refers to a company's or product's reputation as perceived by the public. It encompasses the identity, expectations, memories and stories associated with the company and its ability to live up to them. A strong brand helps differentiate the company from its competitors and establish a solid market position.

Brand Activation

Brand activation is a marketing strategy that engages people through interactive experiences, like events or social media campaigns. By creating memorable moments, it aims to build an emotional connection between the brand and its audience, boosting brand awareness and visibility.

Brand Asset

Brand assets are all the components that make up a brand's identity. They include tangible elements such as the logo, typography and colours, as well as intangible elements such as the brand voice and story.

¹Various sources including <https://www.nineblaess.de/blog/brand-glossary-branding-terms/> and <https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/>

Brand Culture

Brand culture is the set of values and beliefs that shape how a brand behaves and interacts with employees, customers, and stakeholders. It forms the foundation of corporate culture and influences how the brand is perceived internally and externally.

Brand Differentiation

Brand differentiation is how a brand distinguishes itself from the competition by identifying what makes it unique. This can be done in many ways, such as product features, pricing, quality, value or customer service.

Clear differentiation is the first step in effective brand positioning. A brand first defines what sets it apart (differentiation) and then communicates it to establish its place in the market (positioning).

Brand Identity

Brand identity is the collection of visual, verbal, and sensory elements that communicate a brand's unique personality and set it apart from competitors. It includes elements such as logos, colours, fonts, tone of voice, and sounds, all working together to create a consistent and recognisable presence in the market.

Brand identity is also called corporate identity, or CI.

Brand Recognition

Brand recognition is the extent to which consumers can identify a brand based on distinctive elements such as its logo, colours, typography, packaging, sounds, or other sensory cues—without explicitly seeing the brand name.

Brand Storytelling

Brand storytelling is the art of using narratives to communicate a brand's values, identity, and message.

By crafting relatable stories with characters, challenges, and solutions, brands can create emotional connections and a sense of shared identity with their audience.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is strategy businesses use to attract, engage, and retain customers by creating and sharing relevant articles, videos, podcasts, and other media. This approach establishes expertise, promotes brand awareness, and keeps your business top of mind when it's time to buy what you sell.

Digital Marketing

Any marketing that uses electronic devices to convey promotional messaging and measure its impact. In practice, digital marketing typically refers to marketing campaigns that appear on a computer, phone, tablet, or other device. It can take many forms, including online video, display ads, and social media posts. Digital marketing is often compared to "traditional marketing" such as magazine ads, billboards, and direct mail. Oddly, television is usually lumped in with traditional marketing.

Email Marketing

The use of email to promote a business's products and services. Email marketing can make the customers on your email list aware of new products, discounts, and other services. It can also be a softer sell to educate your audience on the value of your brand or keep them engaged between purchases. It can also be anything in between. Mailchimp can help you design, build, and optimize your email marketing to get the best ROI.

Marketing Research

Gathering and analysing information about a market to inform how best to offer a product or service to customers. Marketing research is based on the principles of scientific inquiry and should be objective and systematic. Common methods are focus groups, one-on-one customer interviews, online or telephone customer surveys, and A/B testing different advertising tactics.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Changes made to the content and structure of a website to improve ranking on a search engine results page (SERP). Search engines recommend search engine optimization (SEO) efforts that benefit both the



user and page's ranking (white hat SEO). These include the use of relevant keywords in headlines (H1) and subheads, "friendly" URLs with keywords rather than strings of numbers, and schema markup to make results richer and more detailed.

Social Media Marketing

Using social media to advertise a brand, products, or services. Social media marketing allows a brand to insert itself into ongoing conversations on channels such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Best practices for social media marketing include creating interesting content that links back to your website as well as publicly replying to questions and comments. Posts can be organic, meaning you don't pay anything to "boost" them, or they can be promoted with media dollars.

User Experience (UX)

How a person feels about using a product or service. The discipline of user experience (UX) makes digital experiences efficient, effective, and sometimes entertaining. In the world of digital marketing, UX is often equated with optimizing the user interface (UI) on the website. For example, e-commerce companies want to know about the browsing and checkout experience on their websites.

Gender-related marketing & branding glossary²

Gender-Responsive Marketing

Marketing strategies that consider the different needs, preferences, and behaviours of all genders to ensure inclusivity and avoid bias.

Gender-Inclusive Branding

Branding that actively avoids gender stereotypes and appeals to diverse audiences regardless of gender identity or expression.

Gender Lens Marketing

An approach to marketing that analyses how gender roles, norms, and power dynamics impact consumer behaviour and how businesses can respond equitably.

Female Empowerment Branding

Brand messaging that centres on themes of women's empowerment, leadership, and agency, often tied to social impact missions.

Authentic Storytelling

Sharing real-life narratives and experiences—especially from women entrepreneurs—that resonate emotionally with audiences and reflect genuine brand values.

She-economy

A term used to describe the growing economic power of women as consumers and business owners, influencing marketing strategies and product development.

Inclusive Imagery

The intentional use of visuals that represent people of all genders, ethnicities, body types, and backgrounds to foster a sense of belonging.

Representation Marketing

Marketing that ensures underrepresented groups—including women and gender-diverse individuals—are visibly included in campaigns and brand messaging.

² The glossary aims to blend formal definitions with evolving terms used in practice, especially in contexts where gender equity intersects with business and branding.



Stereotype Reversal

A branding tactic that challenges traditional gender roles and norms by flipping or questioning common societal expectations.

Empathy-Based Marketing

A customer-focused approach that uses emotional intelligence and understanding—often central to women-led businesses—to build deeper connections.

Brand Activism

When a brand takes a public stand on gender equality or social justice issues, aligning its identity with specific values and causes.

Gender Bias in Advertising

The tendency for marketing campaigns to reflect or reinforce gender stereotypes, often unintentionally, which can alienate or misrepresent audiences.

Intersectionality in Branding

Recognizing how overlapping identities (e.g., gender, race, class) influence consumer experiences and ensuring brand messaging reflects this complexity.

Voice and Tone Inclusivity

Ensuring that the language used in brand communication does not assume gender roles or exclude non-binary and gender-diverse individuals.

Resources

- Publications

BusinessWomen. Emily Stapylton-Smith. Personal Branding for Female Entrepreneurs (How to Build Influence And Grow Your Business). 18th March 2025.

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The Analysis of female entrepreneurs standing out on the business stage based on social media. Ruixi Wang. Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences. 2024.

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UN Women Ukraine. 2025. [Faces of Marie Claire's digital cover - 10 entrepreneurship stories of the She Made by UN Women Ukraine and WPHF](#)

UN Women EntreprenHER program. 2024. [EntreprenHER programme empowers women entrepreneurs in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa](#)

UN Women, Unstereotype Alliance. 2024. [New research proves that inclusive advertising boosts sales and brand value](#)

UN Women Liberia. 2023. [Young women entrepreneurs closing the gender digital gap through digital marketing](#).

- Webinars

Innovation Women Speak!: <https://innovationwomen.com/webinars/?utm>

Cherie Blair Foundation – Business Bootcamp Webinars: <https://cherieblairfoundation.org/how-can-we-support-you/business-bootcamp/?utm>

Women's Enterprise Development Center: <https://wedcbiz.org/entrepreneur/webinars/>

UN Women-COLEAD South- South Series: Empowering and Growing Women-led Business: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLV5hWpGiR940wWlfhb-X6vg_fyzwS7zvk

- Trainings

ACS Distance Education: <https://www.acsedu.com/courses/agricultural-marketing-621.aspx>

COLEAD training materials: <https://training.colead.link/>

COURSERA Courses on branding: <https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=branding>

Digital Marketing Institute: <https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/resources/lessons>

FAO e-learning Academy: Enabling Women Producers' Successful Engagement in Agribusiness: <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=894&utm>

Safety Culture training: <https://training.safetyculture.com/course-collection/free-marketing-courses/>

UN Women training materials: <https://portal.trainingcentre.unwomen.org/unw-catalog-mobile/>



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