

# Professionalism and Wealth Creation Strategies for Surveyors' Economic Enhancement

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## ***Abstract***

*Surveyors are generally referred to as Information and Solution providers and therefore deserve the right to be monetarily rewarded for their products and services; because money is a reward for their service of solving problems. But this is not the case when you compare Surveyors' revenue generation from survey products and services with those of other allied professionals in the built industry. In light of this, this paper addressed the problems of poor revenue generation from survey products and services carried out by Surveyors and the incoherent mode of practice of Surveyors, which together have adverse effects on Surveyors' economic enhancement. Therefore, this paper formulates wealth creation strategies for the economic enhancement of Surveyors and provides principles that will enable Surveyors to operate as business professionals. The paper recommended, amongst others, that Surveyors should develop a Digital Marketing Strategy in order to promote and market their products and services; and also concluded that professionalism, when combined with business, will make the Surveyor win more of a living with less effort when he specializes, trades and operates as a business professional; thereby achieving the desired economic enhancement.*

**Key Words:** *Professionals; Wealth; Enhancement; Strategies; Economy.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Surveying is often said to be the framework on which all developments on the earth's surface take place (Fajemirokun & Nwilo, 2000). Despite this universally accepted norm, surveying products, which are in the form of maps, plans, descriptive diagrams and reports; the aforesaid deliverables are not well appreciated both by the public and policy decision makers in government; in comparison with products of other allied professionals in the built industry. This error of non appreciation of survey products and services on the part of government and the public has therefore to a large extent resulted in poor patronage of Surveyors, thereby affecting their 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 also contribute to poor patronage and consequently inadequate wealth. The mode of operation of Surveyors in their practice leaves much to be deserved to achieve economic enhancement.

One basic concept learnt in Surveying is “how to overcome obstacles” on site (in the course of our field measurements and observations), ironically, Surveyors have not been taught (or have not learnt) “how to overcome financial obstacles” in their professional practice. Too often, professionals generally concentrate mainly on the technicalities of their profession and leave out the business components/managements 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.*

The problems of inadequate patronage of survey products and services, and the incoherent mode of practice of some Surveyors, together affect Surveyors’ wealth and consequently their economic enhancement.

The objective of this paper therefore is to formulate wealth creation strategies for the economic enhancement of Surveyors both in private practice and in the academia. The paper also aims at providing some principles for Surveyors to operate as business professionals in order to generate meaningful wealth that will result in their economic enhancement.

## 2. BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONALISM

The place of professionalism in the practice of any profession cannot be overemphasized, and the Surveying profession is not an exemption. We have identified practicing Surveyors in Nigeria to be operating in three (3) different categories, which will require harmonization, if Surveyors are to experience economic enhancement. These categories of operations are as follows:

- (i) Operation as mere practitioners
- (ii) Operation as mere professionals
- (iii) Operation as business professionals

It is however a common error to assume that all practitioners operate as professionals and that all professionals also operate as business professionals.

### 2.1 Operation as Mere Practitioners

A mere practitioner is one who engages “casually” in his trade or skill simply to earn money. A Surveyor operating as a mere practitioner is one that does not run an office (no staff, no equipments). His main assets for practice are (1) The Surveyors Council of Nigeria’s (SURCON) **Certificate**, (2) SURCON **Seal** and (3) His **Signature**. *There is no doubt that the Surveyor in this*

*categorization makes money from his practice, but real wealth eludes such a practitioner. He adds no value to the profession of Surveying. Rather than enhances the economy of the Surveyor and the Surveying profession, he declines and devalues it.*

## **2.2 Operation as Mere Professionals**

A Professional takes his work seriously all of the time, full time and invests in his career (Daniel, 2014). A Surveyor operating as a mere professional is one who maintains an office, at least meeting SURCON guidelines, but fails to charge professional fees in adherence/accordance with the approved Survey Scale of Fees; for the reason of having other sources of income outside of Surveying to make meaningful (or comfortable) living. For this category of Surveyors, revenue generation (income) from Surveying is considered as a supplementary income.

The economic enhancement of Surveyors will not be made possible (realizable) by operating either as mere practitioners or as mere professionals.

## **2.3 Operation as Business Professionals**

A Surveyor operating as a business professional is that professional Surveyor who gets involved in the commercial (economic) aspect of survey products and services, as well as practicing the profession full time, adhering to all requirements pertaining to the economic enhancement and status of the profession, who also invests in the profession. Such a Surveyor takes or understands business as a principal activity of the profession, which he engages in, in order to generate meaningful wealth.

A Surveyor's economy will be enhanced with less effort when he specializes, trades and operates as a business professional (Oluborode & Oluborode, 2023). As professionals, we need money to be able to have access to affordable technology and knowledge workers (Chee, 2012).

## **3. 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 values 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 the 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 into the Surveying profession. 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 and the society at large.

(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, 2023). Surveyors’ right to wealth and economic 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. A good example on hand is the survey component of engineering works. 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 economic enhancement of his products and revenue.

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 carry out value based ethical analysis and apply ethical principles in making professional and business decisions (Kalagbor, 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. "...but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Prov.10:4b; The Book of Proverb). Diligence enhances economy!

(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 & Geoinformatics, 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 his survey 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:** 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.

#### 4. 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, 2014). Surveyors as business professionals cannot shy away from creating wealth. Our discussion on strategies for wealth creation will therefore focus on Surveyors in private practice and Surveyors in academia.

##### 4.1 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 (DMS) should be developed to provide easy access of obtaining survey products by clients, which in turn will improve and increase Surveyors' patronage and bring about economic enhancement.

(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.

(iv) **Diversification of Practice:** 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, 2015).

A strategy to diversify into other sectors of survey application services therefore becomes imminent for Surveyors' economic enhancement. Diversification and viable growth of any business of Surveying will only be attainable when we (Surveyors in public, private and academia) see each other as partners in progress (Dabiri, 2015).

(v) **Connectivity and Association:** The Surveyor's ability for economic enhancement will to a reasonable extent depend on how well he is able to connect, associate and partner 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 economic enhancement.

Public Private Partnership will enhance viable Survey business for all and sundry (Dabiri, 2015).

(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 poised to achieve economic enhancement.

A strategy of adherence to Professional Scale of Fees that spells out in clarity the justification for costing of survey jobs should be adopted in order to create wealth for Surveyors (Oluborode & Oluborode, 2023). 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/economic realities.

#### **4.2 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 of Surveying & Geo-information, Surveyors in academia can organize customized training workshops and seminars; and thereby generate wealth for enhanced economy.

(ii) **Leveraging on Collaboration with other Professionals in the Private Sector:** The establishment of an Industrial/Institutional working relationship between Surveyors in academia

and those in the Private sector to address and solve practical/field related problems through research will enhance economy and generate wealth for Surveyors in academia.

(iii) **Commercialization of Publications:** Turning of research findings and publications into published books can serve as a way of wealth generation and enhanced economy for Surveyors in academia.

(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 and enhance economy.

(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 Software 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 and enhance economy.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The paper concluded that professionalism when combined with business will make the Surveyor win more of a living with less effort when he specializes, trades and operates as a business professional; thereby achieving the desired economic enhancement. It was further concluded that the application of the Strategies for wealth creation by Surveyors in academia, as spelt out in this paper, will go a long way to bring about job satisfaction to Surveyors in academia and also serve to provide solution to the dearth of lecturers in our training institutions.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations amongst others were made:

(i) That Surveyors should develop a Digital Marketing Strategy (DMS) in order to promote and market their products and services.



- (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 should seek to improve their income from time to time.
- (iv) That Surveyors operating as business professionals must maintain a good business reputation (integrity).
- (v) That Surveyors must see themselves as dignitaries, position themselves in dignitary areas in order to attract dignitaries into the Surveying profession.
- (vi) That business and professionalism should be harmonized by Surveyors, in order to achieve professional fulfillment.
- (vii) That Surveyors should diversify into other sectors of survey application services in order to achieve economic enhancement.

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