

AN OFFICIAL
INSTITUTE OF
MARKETING
IN MALAWI
MAGAZINE

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the

Marketer

7th EDITION | MAY 2026

AI WON'T
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JOB...**YET**

MALAWI'S
INAUGURAL
SUPERBRAND
AWARDS RAISE
THE BAR.



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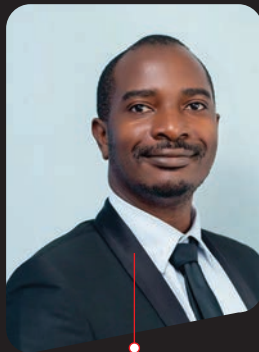
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of *The Marketer* for 2026.

This is a defining year for our Institute. As an elective year, it calls on every member to move beyond conversation into action; to engage, influence, and help shape the future of the marketing profession for the next two-year term. Your participation is not optional; it is essential.

We are also proud to introduce the inaugural IMM Winter School, delivered in partnership with the Marketing Association of Zimbabwe (MAZ) and the Zambia Institute of Marketing (ZIM). Hosted at the Bingu International Convention Centre in Lilongwe this coming June-July, this program brings together forward-thinking professionals for advanced learning and regional exchange. It reflects our commitment to positioning marketers for influence because leadership demands both competence and exposure.

Encouragingly, this vision is already taking shape, with several IMM members recently appointed to national and regional boards under the African Marketing Confederation.

Our flagship CSR initiative, *Keep a Soul Warm (KSW)*, also returns



this year. Members will be invited to contribute toward supporting vulnerable communities with warm clothing and bedding. This initiative speaks to the heart of marketing in creating meaningful impact. I urge you not only to give, but to participate and connect when the time comes.

As leaders, we must remain learners. This edition offers insights, trends, and thought-provoking features designed to challenge and inspire. Our member debates continue to provide a dynamic platform for engagement. I encourage you to take part.

Please also save the date for the Annual Elective Conference, 3rd–6th September 2026, at Sunbird Nkopola in Mangochi. Early booking is advised, with accommodation allocated on a first-pay, first-served basis.

Kindly ensure your membership is renewed to retain access to exclusive benefits. Additionally, download the IMMsync Member App to stay connected as we advance our digital agenda.

Special appreciation to my editor, Mr. Menard Msukwa, all contributors, and our design partners, The Jupiter Drawing Room, for bringing this edition to life.

Enjoy this edition.

Yours in Marketing,

Daniel Ngwira

Editor-in-Chief & Director of Communications and Public Relations for Institute of Marketing in Malawi.

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Did You Know?



2026 is an election year for the Institute of Marketing in Malawi.

Position yourself boldly, engage the membership confidently, and step forward to contribute to the future leadership and growth of Malawi's marketing profession.

President's Note

Esteemed Marketers,

I am thrilled to welcome you to yet another edition of the Marketer magazine, our first in 2026. This magazine is a special asset of IMM as through it we give you our members access to enriching content from the local, regional and international scene and this edition is no different. The magazine is a platform for showcasing what your brands are doing on the market. One of the ways you can contribute meaningfully to the profession is through sharing your knowledge with your peers. For those who would want to write and contribute, I encourage you to reach out to the Secretariat or Directorate of Communications and I look forward to seeing your articles in the next editions.

This edition comes at a time when our country is passing through a complex phase economically and I am sure a lot of you are dealing with a lot of adjustments in your various organisations. This is a time where our innovative and creative sparks as marketers must come to the fore as that is the primary means by which we are going to remain relevant in our organisations. The national development agenda, MW2063, which you and me are a critical part of as marketers, requires us to be agile. So, I am placing a challenge on you to rise to the occasion.

For the Institute of Marketing in Malawi, I couldn't be more pleased with the trajectory we are on. Our calendar of events is out, and this gives you an opportunity to plan your year well in advance and it is packed with a lot of events that you are going to love. Member webinars every month on various topics, the popular member debates and so many other activities are lined



up. We have the first ever joint Winter School in collaboration with our sister associations from Zimbabwe and Zambia and what a privilege that as Malawi we are the hosts. I encourage you to register for this event. As we continue to add value to your membership, we have signed two exciting partnerships already with more on the way. Our partnership with Vanguard Life Assurance gives you embedded funeral cover benefits in your membership fee, a first for a professional body in Malawi. You can now also enjoy discounted prices from Rainbow Paints and by the time you lay hands on this copy we would have probably announced more partnerships.

In order to improve your member experience, we have launched the MyIMM app where you are able to access a lot of resources and pay for your membership as well. The app will continue to be improved to offer you a seamless user experience. It is my belief that the My IMM app will help us be more efficient in how we communicate and make requisite resources available to you. This year's conference in Mangochi is coming a bit earlier than usual and this is in order to balance between available dates at the venue which you our members chose and to accommodate two key partner events happening later that same month being the Nedbank IMC Conference in South Africa where

through the relationship we have with the IMC, IMM members enjoy a fixed discount for in-person attendance. Later that month our neighbors Zambia will host the African Marketing Confederation in Livingstone, another event for you to get ready for.

I am also pleased to share that I have appointed some of our members to sit on various committees at the African Marketing Confederation. I believe that they will represent IMM well and contribute to the greater good of marketing on the continent. Additionally, I would like to thank the Government of Malawi for recognising the critical role of marketing in national development by giving us a seat on the board of the newly established Malawi Tourism Agency. As key positions in this Authority are advertised, I urge you to apply so that our voice as marketers is amplified.

Work on the Marketing Bill is an on-going process and we are confident that this year we will make very significant strides with the hope that by the time the year ends, the Bill will be in effect.

Enjoy the read and I will be talking to you again soon!

George Damson,
President.

**MALAWI'S FINANCIAL
TRANSFORMATION:**

Life After Cheques. A Leap Into Digital Finance

By: Miller John Joshua; Director of Membership for IMM, Head of Business Development & Resource Mobilisation, Malawi Red Cross Society



Introduction

By 31 December 2025, Malawi officially phased out cheque payments, marking a historic turning point in the country's financial sector evolution. Spearheaded by the Bankers Association of Malawi (BAM), the Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM), and commercial banks, the reform reflects a decisive shift toward faster, safer, and more efficient digital payment systems. The move aligns with the National Payment System Vision and Strategy (2023–2027) and positions Malawi within global financial modernisation trends.

Why Cheques Are Being Phased Out

For decades, cheques were central to business and institutional transactions. However, their relevance has steadily declined. Today, cheque transactions represent only a small fraction of total payments in Malawi. They are



As cheque usage fades, fintech innovation is reshaping Malawi's financial landscape.

costly to process, slow to clear, and vulnerable to fraud, forgery, and administrative inefficiencies.

Digital alternatives provide quicker settlement, greater transparency, and lower operational costs for banks and businesses alike. Phasing out cheques is therefore not merely a procedural adjustment, it is a strategic reform designed to strengthen Malawi's

national payment infrastructure and accelerate the shift toward a cash-lite economy.

The Rise of Fintech and Digital Payments

As cheque usage fades, fintech innovation is reshaping Malawi's financial landscape.

Mobile money has become the backbone of financial inclusion, with estimated subscriber numbers surpassing 20 million. Everyday transactions, from airtime purchases to person-to-person transfers are increasingly conducted through mobile platforms, expanding access to financial services beyond traditional banking halls.

At the same time, fintech companies such as PayChangu, Kakupay, Epay, Kwenda.co etc are collaborating with banks to provide instant transfers, merchant payment solutions, and digital gateways that power e-commerce. Digital wallets like Mukuru Wallet are helping underserved and unbanked communities store, send, and save money more conveniently.

Efforts to improve interoperability, allowing seamless transactions across banks, mobile money operators, and fintech platforms are gradually creating a more integrated national payments ecosystem. At the same time, regulators and industry stakeholders are strengthening cybersecurity frameworks and consumer protection measures to safeguard digital users.

The Benefits of Going Digital

The transition to digital finance offers multiple advantages:

- 1. Speed and Efficiency:** Digital transactions clear instantly or within minutes, unlike cheques that may take days to process.
- 2. Enhanced Security:** Electronic systems reduce fraud risks associated with lost, forged, or altered paper instruments.
- 3. Lower Costs:** Digital platforms often reduce transaction and processing expenses for financial institutions and customers.
- 4. Financial Inclusion:** Mobile money and digital banking services extend access to rural communities and individuals without traditional bank accounts, helping integrate more citizens into the formal economy.

Collectively, these benefits create a more dynamic and competitive financial environment that supports economic growth.

Challenges in a Low-Adoption Economy

Despite its promise, digital transformation presents real challenges—particularly in a country where adoption remains uneven.



Infrastructure gaps persist in rural areas where internet connectivity, network reliability, and electricity supply can be inconsistent. Limited digital literacy also poses barriers, as some citizens lack the confidence or knowledge to use digital platforms effectively.

Transaction fees on mobile and digital services may discourage frequent use among low-income earners. Additionally, while mobile subscriptions are high, active digital financial usage and rural penetration still lag behind urban levels, highlighting disparities in access.

Addressing these constraints requires sustained investment in infrastructure, consumer education, affordable pricing models, and inclusive policies.

The Future of Banking in Malawi

The elimination of cheques signals more than a payment reform—it marks the beginning of a digital-first era in Malawi's financial system.

The country is laying the foundation for a cash-lite economy where transactions are traceable, efficient, and accessible through mobile and online platforms. Fintech and digital banking innovations have the potential to

significantly reduce the unbanked population by leveraging agent networks, mobile wallets, and simplified digital onboarding processes.

Increased competition and collaboration between banks and fintech firms is likely to spur innovation, create new financial products, and empower small businesses and entrepreneurs. As trust in digital systems grows, more Malawians will manage savings, access credit, and conduct business electronically, thereby democratising financial services across income levels.

A Transformative Path Forward

While infrastructure, literacy, and affordability challenges remain, Malawi's decision to phase out cheques by the end of 2025 represents a bold step toward modernisation. With coordinated efforts among regulators, financial institutions, fintech innovators, and communities, the country has an opportunity to deepen financial inclusion and strengthen economic resilience.

Malawi's financial future is not only digital, it is increasingly inclusive, interconnected, and poised to drive sustainable growth in the years ahead.

From Hospitality to Development: What Marketing in the Corporate World Taught Me

By: *Tamara Chikopa Chapeyama.*


I have had the opportunity to experience communications and marketing from two very different worlds: working in a non-profit space, and now operating within a corporate, hospitality-driven environment.

At first glance, the differences are clear.

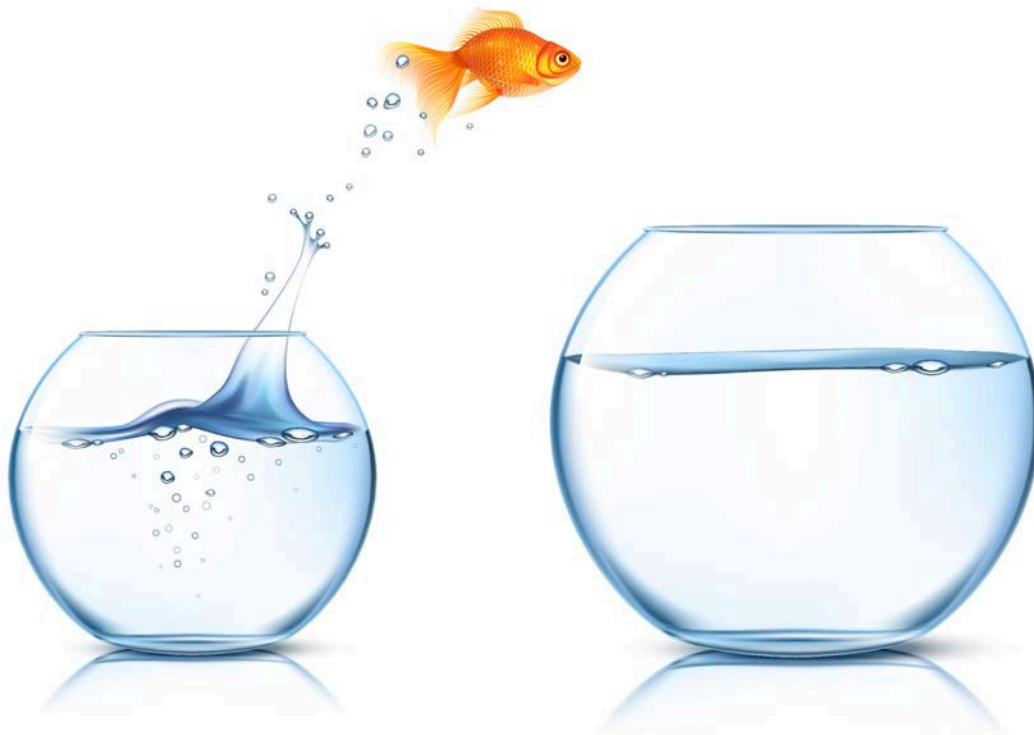
In the non-profit space, communication is often centered on impact; telling stories of change, engaging communities, and ensuring that voices are heard. In contrast, the corporate world, especially in hospitality, is driven by visibility, positioning, and results; how effectively you attract, engage, and retain clients.

But working in both spaces has taught me something important: while the principles of communication and marketing remain the same, the context shapes how they are applied.

In the non-profit space, I learned how to communicate with purpose and clarity, to simplify complex ideas for diverse audiences, and to focus on people rather than just messaging. Every piece of communication had to align with a broader goal; impact.



I stopped seeing it as just content, campaigns, or messaging, and started seeing it as a bridge between people, purpose, and outcomes.



In the corporate space, I have strengthened a different but equally important set of skills. I have learned to think more strategically about positioning and audience targeting, to develop and execute marketing strategies aligned with business goals, and to deliver messages that drive action and measurable results. I have also gained experience in positioning products and services effectively, using data and client insights to refine messaging, and building a strong, consistent brand presence across both digital and offline platforms, all while adapting quickly in a fast-paced, client-facing environment.

Somewhere between these two worlds, my understanding of communication and marketing matured.

I stopped seeing it as just content, campaigns, or messaging, and started seeing it as a bridge between people, purpose, and outcomes.

Today, whether I am engaging a client, developing content, or contributing to a broader strategy, I approach communication and marketing with both lenses: the intentionality and purpose



Figure 1. Tamara in 2026 (Corporate Sector)

of development work, and the strategic, results-driven mindset of the corporate world.

Irrefutably, effective communication and marketing is not just about being heard. It is about being understood, trusted, and acted upon; and that applies everywhere, whether you are building a brand or supporting a cause.

For those who have worked across sectors, what differences, or similarities, have shaped your approach to communication?

Tamara Chikopa Chapeyama.
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 LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tamara-chikopa-chapeyama-426950165>



Figure 2. Tamara in 2020 (Non-Profit Sector)

About the Author

Tamara Chikopa Chapeyama is a Marketing, Communications, and Business Development professional with experience spanning the corporate hospitality sector and non-profit environments.

Sales, Marketing, and Guest Relations Manager at Hotel Victoria in Blantyre, Malawi.

Malawi's Inaugural Superbrand Awards Raise the Bar.

By Daniel Ngwira, Director of Communications and Public Relations for the Institute of Marketing in Malawi, Editor-in-Chief of The Marketer Magazine.



Malawi's corporate and marketing community witnessed a historic milestone with the successful hosting of the inaugural IMM Superbrand Awards, a landmark initiative designed to recognise the country's most outstanding and influential brands.

The maiden awards introduced a new concept in Malawi's recognition landscape; a research-driven national ranking of brands based on market credibility, performance, and consumer trust. To populate the rankings, the Institute of Marketing in Malawi (IMM) commissioned independent market research conducted nationwide to identify brands that defined excellence in 2025.

Over several months, brands across multiple sectors including construction,

finance, banking, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), and small and medium enterprises were evaluated and ranked. The research process ultimately identified Malawi's Top 200 Brands, with the leading brands in each industry category recognised during the awards ceremony.

The prestigious event was held at the iconic Amaryllis Hotel Blantyre, drawing a record attendance from across the country's corporate sector. Executives, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and marketing professionals gathered to celebrate brand excellence in what has quickly become one of Malawi's most significant corporate recognition platforms.





Guest of Honour at the event was Ms. Jean Munyenembe, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Industrialisation and Business, whose presence underscored the national economic significance of strong and competitive brands. Superbrand Awards chair Darles Kasonda, who is Chief Executive Officer for Insurance Association of Malawi, commended all the efforts behind the event including companies and organisations who supported the project.

At the pinnacle of the awards, Illovo Sugar Malawi emerged as the overall winner, earning the distinction of Malawi's Number One Superbrand following the nationwide assessment.

The research underpinning the awards was conducted by Impact Research Centre, which spent nearly eight months gathering data and consulting consumers across districts throughout Malawi. Lead consultant Graciano Bwanali praised IMM for introducing what he described as a groundbreaking initiative in Malawi's marketing and business environment. According to Bwanali, the methodology ensured that the results reflected the voice of the market itself. By engaging consumers directly across the country, the research captured authentic perceptions of brand performance, trust, and relevance within the Malawian marketplace. IMM President George Damson described the inaugural edition as a major success and an important step in strengthening the country's marketing ecosystem. "The first edition of the IMM Superbrand Awards was a massive

success. Brands that had never previously participated in our annual awards, which usually take place alongside our annual conference,

“We saw a surge in requests for corporate membership because brands feel IMM has given them a reason to belong to the professional community we are building. We look forward to an even stronger edition in 2026 as we refine the processes and apply lessons learned from the 2025 event,”

found an opportunity to engage through this new platform. The overwhelming turnout demonstrated the level of interest the initiative generated,” he said.

Damson added that the awards had already begun strengthening the Institute's membership base, with several organisations expressing interest in joining the professional marketing body.

“We saw a surge in requests for corporate membership because brands feel IMM has given them a reason to belong to the professional community we are building. We look forward to an even stronger edition in 2026 as we refine the processes and apply lessons learned from the 2025 event,” he said.



The awards ceremony itself was a vibrant celebration of business excellence. Despite the extensive programme recognising multiple categories, the audience remained engaged throughout the evening, reflecting the significance of the recognition being bestowed upon the country's leading brands.

The night concluded with live entertainment from Mingoli Band, bringing the audience to the dance floor in a celebratory atmosphere led by the IMM President, the Guest of Honour, and members of the Institute's Board of Directors. Among other notable attendees

was Isabel Kachinjika, the Institute's first president, whose longstanding contribution to the marketing profession continues to inspire new generations of marketers in Malawi and beyond.

With its successful debut, the IMM Superbrand Awards in Malawi have established a new national benchmark for recognising brand excellence across industries. The initiative is expected to grow into a defining platform that celebrates companies shaping consumer trust, driving innovation, and strengthening Malawi's economic competitiveness.

As the country continues to pursue industrial growth and private-sector development, the Superbrand Awards signal the beginning of a new era in recognising organisations that are not only market leaders but also key contributors to Malawi's broader economic narrative. Find all the successful Superbrands here: <https://imm.mw/superbrands/>. Feedback: ngwiradaniel0@gmail.com.



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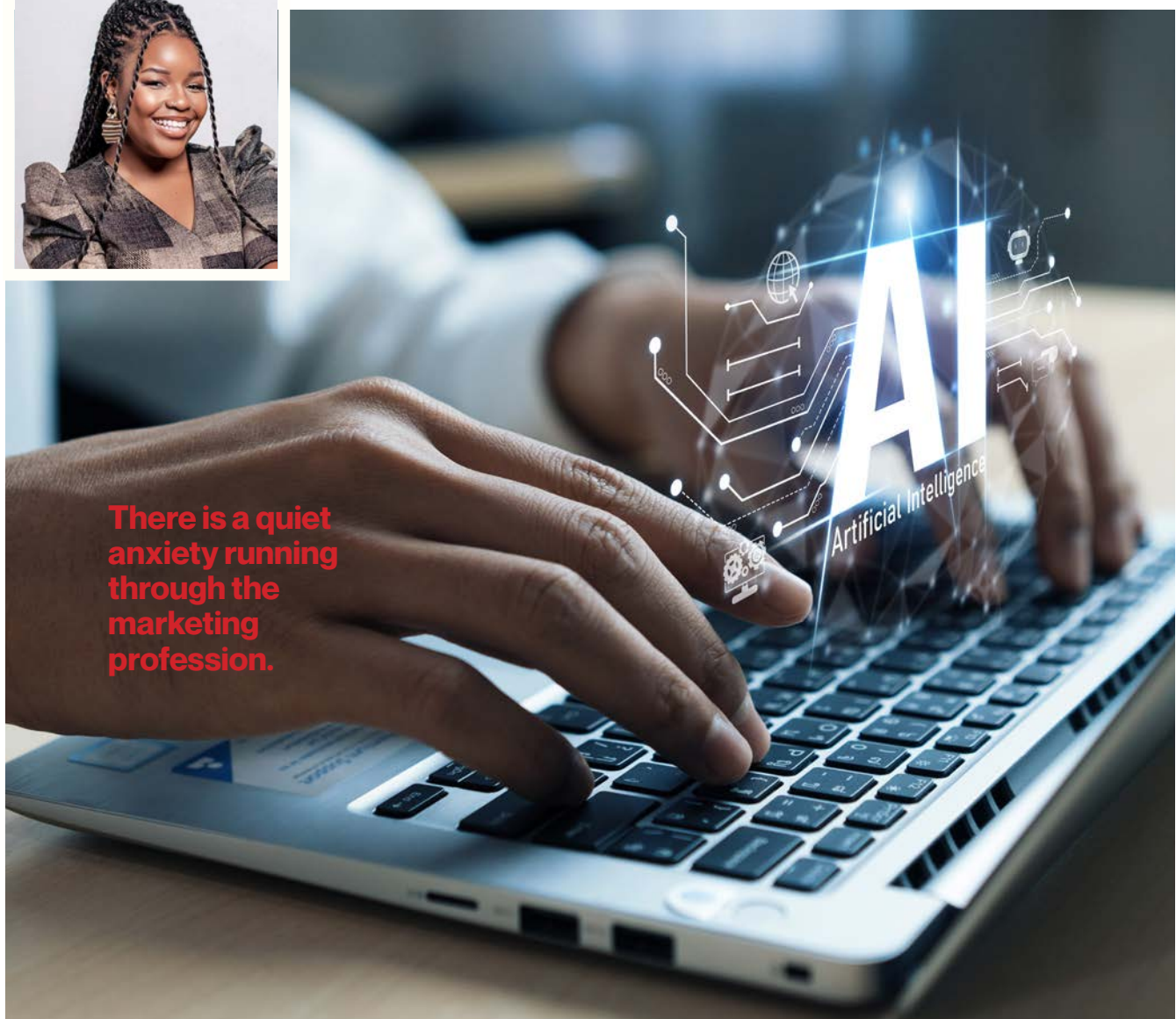
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AI Marketing Jobs, the Experience Paradox,
and the Global Opportunity:

How Malawian Marketers Can Stay Competitive in a World That Keeps Moving

By: Tanya Zoe Chireshe.



There is a quiet anxiety running through the marketing profession.

Job descriptions now ask for “AI marketing experience,” “prompt engineering,” “automation strategy,” or “hands-on experience with generative AI tools.” Yet many of these tools did not exist two or three years ago. Some barely existed last year.

For many marketers, especially in emerging markets like Malawi, the question feels unavoidable: how are we expected to have experience in something that is still being invented?

This challenge is compounded by realities often missing from global conversations: forex restrictions, limited access to paid tools, uneven connectivity, and markets that still rely heavily on human relationships, trust, and context.

This is not a story about falling behind. It is a story about how relevance is changing and where opportunity actually lies.

THE AI EXPERIENCE PARADOX

AI has entered marketing faster than any previous shift the industry has experienced. Faster than social media. Faster than digital advertising. Faster than mobile-first strategies.

Traditionally, experience was built linearly: learn a tool, apply it repeatedly, master it over time. AI disrupts this model entirely.

By the time a marketer becomes “experienced” in a specific tool, it has updated, changed pricing, or been replaced. As a result, experience is no longer defined by tools alone.

Instead, global employers increasingly value strategic judgement, critical evaluation, adaptability, ethical and cultural awareness, and the ability to

integrate AI into real business contexts.

HOW SEASONED MARKETERS ACTUALLY EVOLVE

The most competitive professionals are not trying to become engineers or AI developers. They are evolving their role.

AI can generate copy, visuals, reports, and schedules. What it cannot do is understand local nuance, cultural sensitivity, brand history, or economic and political context.

Experienced marketers add value by directing AI, not competing with it.

THE HIDDEN COST OF “KEEPING UP”

Testing AI properly often requires paid subscriptions, dollar-based payments, and ongoing experimentation. For Malawian marketers operating under forex constraints, this creates an uneven playing field.

Innovation, however, has never been about access alone. It has always been about how intelligently resources are used.

WHAT GLOBAL REMOTE PLATFORMS ARE SIGNALING

Platforms such as Braintrust and We Work Remotely increasingly include AI in marketing roles but rarely as the sole requirement.

Instead, AI appears as a workflow enhancer, a supporting capability, and a contextual expectation rather than a hard gate.

THE RISE OF AI-ADJACENT ROLES

There is a growing demand for AI-adjacent roles such as AI content reviewers, output evaluators,

editorial reviewers, and quality analysts.

These roles exist because AI still requires human judgement particularly around tone, accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and brand alignment.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR MALAWIAN MARKETERS

AI content reviewing builds real experience, relies on existing marketing strengths, and is globally accessible. It offers a credible bridge into AI-enabled global work without expensive tools.

COMPETING GLOBALLY WITHOUT CLAIMING TO BE AN AI EXPERT

Global employers value honesty and clarity. Positioning oneself as an AI-enabled thinker rather than an AI specialist builds trust.

Making thinking visible through case studies, reflections, and documented decision-making matters more than listing tools.

THE WAY FORWARD

Malawian marketers do not need to catch up to the world. We need to position ourselves properly within it.

Our advantage lies in strategic clarity, cultural intelligence, adaptability, systems thinking, and ethical judgement.

FINAL THOUGHT

AI will continue to evolve. Tools will change. Job titles will shift.

But the global market will always need marketers who can interpret, refine, and lead, especially when machines are involved.

Experience still matters. It just looks different now.



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**STRENGTHENING OUR MEMBERSHIP
VALUE PROPOSITION:**

Introducing the IMM Embedded Funeral Cash Benefit



By: Miller John Joshua; Director of Membership for IMM, Head of Business Development & Resource Mobilisation, Malawi Red Cross Society.

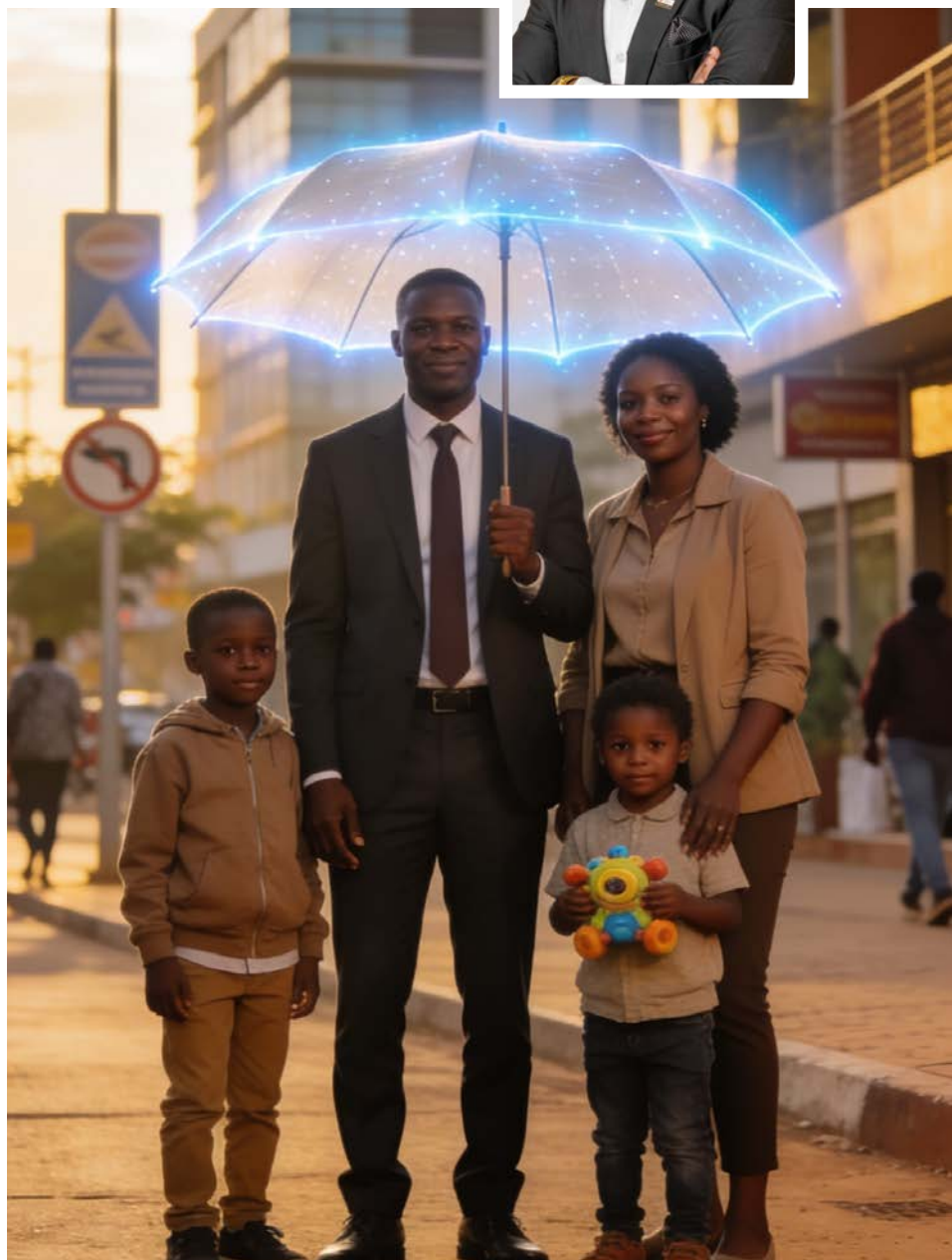
Introduction

The Institute of Marketing in Malawi (IMM) has taken a bold and compassionate step in redefining what professional membership means in the 21st century. Through a strategic partnership with Vanguard Life Assurance Company Limited, IMM has introduced the **IMM Funeral Plan**, an embedded funeral cash benefit designed exclusively for eligible, fully paid-up members.

This milestone initiative, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), positions IMM as the first professional association in Malawi to offer a structured group funeral insurance benefit as part of its membership package. It marks a progressive shift from traditional professional benefits toward a more holistic, member-centered value proposition.

What Is the IMM Funeral Plan?

The IMM Funeral Plan is a group funeral insurance scheme underwritten by Vanguard Life Assurance Company Limited. It provides financial assistance to designated beneficiaries in the unfortunate event of the death of a paid-up IMM member, whether due to natural causes, illness, or accidental causes.



Through this arrangement, IMM facilitates the payment of a funeral cash benefit to the member's next of kin or beneficiaries. The objective is simple yet profound: to ease the financial burden on families during and after a deeply emotional and challenging time.

This initiative underscores IMM's commitment to ensuring that membership offers not only professional growth, networking opportunities, and certification, but also meaningful social protection.

Why This Benefit Matters

Funeral expenses can impose significant financial strain on families. During moments of grief, financial uncertainty can compound emotional distress. The IMM Funeral Plan provides:

- **Peace of mind** for members, knowing their families will receive financial support.
- **Financial relief** to beneficiaries to assist with funeral related expenses.
- **A stronger sense of community**, reinforcing IMM's role as more than a professional body.

This embedded benefit reflects IMM's evolution into a caring, responsive, and socially responsible institution. It demonstrates that membership extends beyond conferences and professional development. It is about standing together in both success and sorrow.

Eligibility and Benefit Structure

The Funeral Plan is available to **eligible, fully paid-up IMM members**. Members are encouraged to keep their annual subscriptions or membership up to date to enjoy this and other exclusive benefits.

The funeral cash benefits are structured according to membership categories:

- **Fellow Members**
MK 2,500,000
- **Full Members**
MK 2,500,000
- **Affiliate Members**
MK 1,500,000
- **Student Members**
MK 500,000
- **Corporate Categories (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Star Members)** – up to MK 2,500,000 per paid-up member, depending on package level

This structured approach ensures fairness, sustainability, and meaningful coverage across all membership tiers.

How the Benefit Works

The process has been designed to be efficient, transparent, and compassionate:

1. A member maintains good standing by remaining fully paid-up.
2. In the unfortunate event of death, the designated beneficiary informs IMM.
3. IMM works closely with Vanguard Life Assurance to process the claim.
4. The funeral cash benefit is paid to the next of kin or beneficiary.

By leveraging a group insurance arrangement, IMM maximises collective strength to deliver tangible value to members.

A Progressive Step in Membership Innovation

The introduction of the IMM Funeral Plan reflects:

- Strategic partnership with a credible insurer
- Enhanced and practical member value
- A holistic and modern approach to professional association management
- A deep commitment to member welfare

IMM is setting a new benchmark for professional bodies in Malawi. This initiative demonstrates leadership, innovation, and responsiveness to the real-life needs of members.

More Than Membership — A Community

The IMM Funeral Plan symbolises solidarity and unity. It reinforces the idea that IMM is not merely an association of marketers; it is a community bound by shared purpose and mutual care.

Members are encouraged to:

- Maintain active, paid-up status
- Submit updated next-of-kin or beneficiary details to IMM Secretariat
- Stay informed through official IMM communication channels

As IMM continues to grow and innovate, this initiative stands as a powerful reminder that true professional excellence includes compassion and social responsibility.

IMM is Levelling Up While Caring for Its Members!

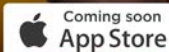


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2026 MARKETERS' CONFERENCE AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

THEME: MARKETING REDEFINED: SUSTAINABILITY, ETHICS AND INNOVATION

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	EARLY BIRD	NORMAL PAYMENT	LATE PAYMENT
Members Full Package	MK 2,880,000.00	MK 2,980,000.00	MK 3,180,000.00
Members Conference Only	MK 1,680,000.00	MK 1,780,000.00	MK 1,980,000.00
NON-MEMBER			
	EARLY BIRD	NORMAL PAYMENT	LATE PAYMENT
Non-Members Full Package	MK 3,400,000.00	MK 3,500,000.00	MK 3,700,000.00
Non-Members Conference Only	MK 2,200,000.00	MK 2,300,000.00	MK 2,400,000.00
Awards Attendance Only	PCDM - Full package	Student Fees - 1 Day Pass	
MK 350,000.00	MK150,000.00	MK 120,000.00	
PAYMENT WINDOWS			
Early Bird: 20th April- 20th May Normal Payment: 21st May-14th August Late Payment: 15th August-24th August			

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THE 2026 ANNUAL MARKETERS' CONFERENCE

THEME: MARKETING REDEFINED: SUSTAINABILITY, ETHICS AND INNOVATION

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WOMEN IN MARKETING BRUNCH:

“Give to Gain”, A Memorable First for Malawi



By: Andrew Govati. The author is a Marketing Officer at the Institute of Marketing in Malawi.



Figure 1: Group Photo

The Institute of Marketing in Malawi (IMM) successfully hosted its first-ever Women in Marketing Brunch on Saturday, 28th March 2026, at the Protea Hotel by Marriott Ryalls in Blantyre. Held under the theme “Give to Gain” in commemoration of Women’s Month, the event brought together dynamic women in marketing, business, and leadership for a day of insightful conversations, networking, and memorable experiences.

The event was officially opened by IMM President, Mr George Damson, who reaffirmed the Institute’s commitment to creating platforms that foster networking, professional growth, and empowerment for women in marketing. He warmly welcomed the keynote speaker, South African author and strategist Nicky Verd, and expressed gratitude to its partners, Vanguard Life Assurance Limited and Platinum Z, at the function.

Nicky Verd delivered a powerful and thought-provoking keynote titled “Future Ready Woman: Thriving in Disruption”. Drawing from her personal journey of being laid off to discovering the world of Artificial Intelligence, she encouraged women to take charge of change rather than fear it.

Key highlights from her address included:

“Whether by circumstance or by deliberate choice, your life will be disrupted.”

“When you initiate your own disruption, you can control it.”

Nicky emphasised that every industry is being transformed by technology and urged participants not to fear AI, but to embrace it as the new infrastructure for business and innovation.



Figure 2: Nicky Verd Giving Keynote Presentation



Figure 3: Panel discussion with Lesandra Koreaia, Thokozani Sande, Teleetha Jusab and Nicole Meki

The keynote was followed by a vibrant panel discussion on “The Complete Woman: Career, Business and Life”, moderated by IMM Director of Income Generation, Nicole Ngulube.

The panelists shared honest, practical insights drawn from their own experiences. They spoke about balancing multiple roles as women, the importance of results-driven performance, maintaining integrity in business, prioritising health and well-being, and giving full attention to whatever role one is playing at any given moment.



Immersive Experiences

Figure 4: Wezi Mzumara hosting a Cocoa and Chocolate tasting session

Adding a delightful touch to the day, Wezi Mzumara of Kwanza Cocoa led a 45-minute interactive chocolate tasting session. Participants explored the journey from raw Cocoa to finished artisan chocolates and bonbons, including unique Malawian flavours such as Kambuzi-infused creations. Wezi inspired many to consider opportunities in Cocoa farming and chocolate making.



Figure 5: Fatrah Kawinga During Her Presentation on Personal Branding

The day concluded with an engaging session on Personal Branding by Fatrah Kawinga, who shared the key pillars of building a strong personal brand and her own journey of intentional brand evolution.

The first-ever Women in Marketing Brunch was an enjoyable affair, being a day of inspiration, learning, networking, and enjoyment. To every visionary woman who showed up, showed out, and made the first-ever Women in Marketing Brunch truly unforgettable, thank you!

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AI Won't Take Your Job... Yet

By: Stanley Chiyora.



We are a lazy species. You, me, and everyone else walking this blue marble. I know that probably sounds like an insult, but stay with me.

From our hunter-gatherer ancestors to the moon-walking generation, humans have always had one thing in common: we really don't like hard work. The truth is, laziness is what has been driving innovation since the dawn of civilization. We did not invent the wheel because we were passionate about transport. No. We did it because carrying things was backbreaking work and we were done with it.

Our desire to avoid hard work has led us to invent tools and machines. It is not really a hatred of labour; it

is just our persistent desire to do things better or easier. Washing machines, dishwashers, telephone switchboards, electric fans, these aren't just gadgets. They're milestones in the long tale of Homo sapiens.

Every major leap forward in civilisation traces back to someone who looked at the status quo and thought of a better way to do it.

Now here we are with AI, and we are back to laughing and panicking in equal measure.

AI is not very new, though. It did not arrive the day ChatGPT started writing our cover letters. It has been quietly running our lives for years, filtering our spam and flooding our social media with unwanted recommendations. It evolved slowly, just like how the Industrial Revolution did not start with giant factories, but with a bunch of weird-looking machines in someone's shed. The difference now is that AI has moved from the background to centre stage.

When the mechanical loom arrived in 18th century England, textile workers smashed the machines in protest. The Luddites, as history now calls them, were not foolish or backwards. They knew their livelihoods, wages, and social status were threatened by unskilled labourers operating machines. But the world didn't end. Instead, work shifted and new industries appeared. The people who once wove cloth by hand did not all vanish but they, and their children, moved into the factories, the railways, the new trades that nobody had names for yet.

Same story with the printing press, which wiped out an entire class of manuscript scribes. Same with the advent of the automobile, which killed the horse-and-carriage industry. Every single time, the prophecy was the same: this machine will make us obsolete.

The difference this time, which is worth mentioning, is speed. Previous industrial revolutions unfolded over decades. People had time to adjust. But AI is supersonic, moving faster

than every other revolution, and the window for adaptation is shorter than anything we have dealt with before.

Back then, machines took over physical labour. Now, AI is doing the cognitive work like decision making so we can sit down, floss our teeth, and complain about Monday. It has been crunching data behind the scenes in finance, business, aviation, and pretty much everything else.

AI is genuinely brilliant at pattern recognition, processing enormous volumes of data, repetitive decision-making, and working at a scale no human can match. It can read a thousand contracts faster than any lawyer alive. It can spot anomalies in a financial dataset that would take a team of analysts weeks and a lake retreat to find.

In some industries, AI is already transforming things in ways most people haven't fully registered. In drug discovery, AI systems are identifying potential compounds in months that would have taken traditional research years. In climate science, machine learning models are improving the accuracy of weather and disaster prediction in ways that will genuinely save lives. In agriculture, AI-powered tools are helping smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa get better yield forecasts and market price information through nothing more than a basic mobile phone.

None of that is science fiction. It is happening now.

But AI is not the problem. Despite all the dystopian headlines and fear-mongering, AI is, in fact, the next big leap, a complete shift in the story of human civilization. It is as huge to us as fire was to our forefathers. It is a pivot point in history, just like any one of the four industrial revolutions before it.

So, instead of worrying about AI stealing our jobs, maybe we should pull ourselves together and actually prepare for it. The truth is, most of the jobs people currently have will soon be done by machines better, faster, and cheaper. But it is also true that every previous wave of

But AI is not the problem. Despite all the dystopian headlines and fear-mongering, AI is, in fact, the next big leap, a complete shift in the story of human civilization. It is as huge to us as fire was to our forefathers. It is a pivot point in history, just like any one of the four industrial revolutions before it.

automation created new categories of work that nobody predicted, and there is no compelling reason to believe this time is categorically different.

The professionals who are going to do well here are not the ones who resist AI and obviously not the ones who hand everything over to it uncritically. They are the ones who use it to do more of what only humans can do. Think of a doctor who uses AI for diagnostics to spend more actual time with patients. A lawyer who uses AI research tools to focus on strategy and advocacy instead of document review. A teacher who uses it to personalise learning and give more attention to the students who need it most. This is true because creativity and solving complex problems will remain indispensable human skills.

This, however, does not mean everyone should become a data scientist or learn to write code. It means everyone needs to understand what AI can and cannot do, and position their work accordingly.

The current AI conversation is stuck in a binary. Either AI is an existential threat that will usher in digital apocalypse and leave millions behind, or it's going to solve every human problem and we should all relax. In my opinion, both camps are wrong, and both are a distraction. The doomsayers are so worried as if AI is coming like Thanos to snap their jobs into

oblivion. The evangelists are so busy celebrating efficiency gains.

Meanwhile, the people actually navigating this well are the ones who stopped arguing about whether AI is good or bad, and started looking at this change, and how they fit into what comes next.

The reality is, AI is not here to take over the world, it is here to work with us, helping us do things faster and smarter. It is more like a supercharged assistant taking care of all the boring stuff we are too lazy to do. Rejecting AI is like clinging to that old "real men use three pedals" gospel while the rest of the world glides smoothly in automatic cars. Sure, shifting gears might make you feel like Mario Andretti, but soon, manual transmissions will be nothing more than museum pieces.

The AI revolution is not coming. It is already here, already changing how we work. And like every revolution before it, it is not asking for permission.

The shadoof looked absurd to the farmers who first heard of it. The mechanical loom was surely terrifying to the workers who first faced it. Fire, in all likelihood, looked dangerous to the first hominid who saw it; because well, it was. But the ones who learned to use it did not just survive. They transformed the entire trajectory of the species.

AI is fire. The only question worth asking is whether you are going to stand in front of it, or learn to cook with it as we re-imagine our roles in the age of machines.

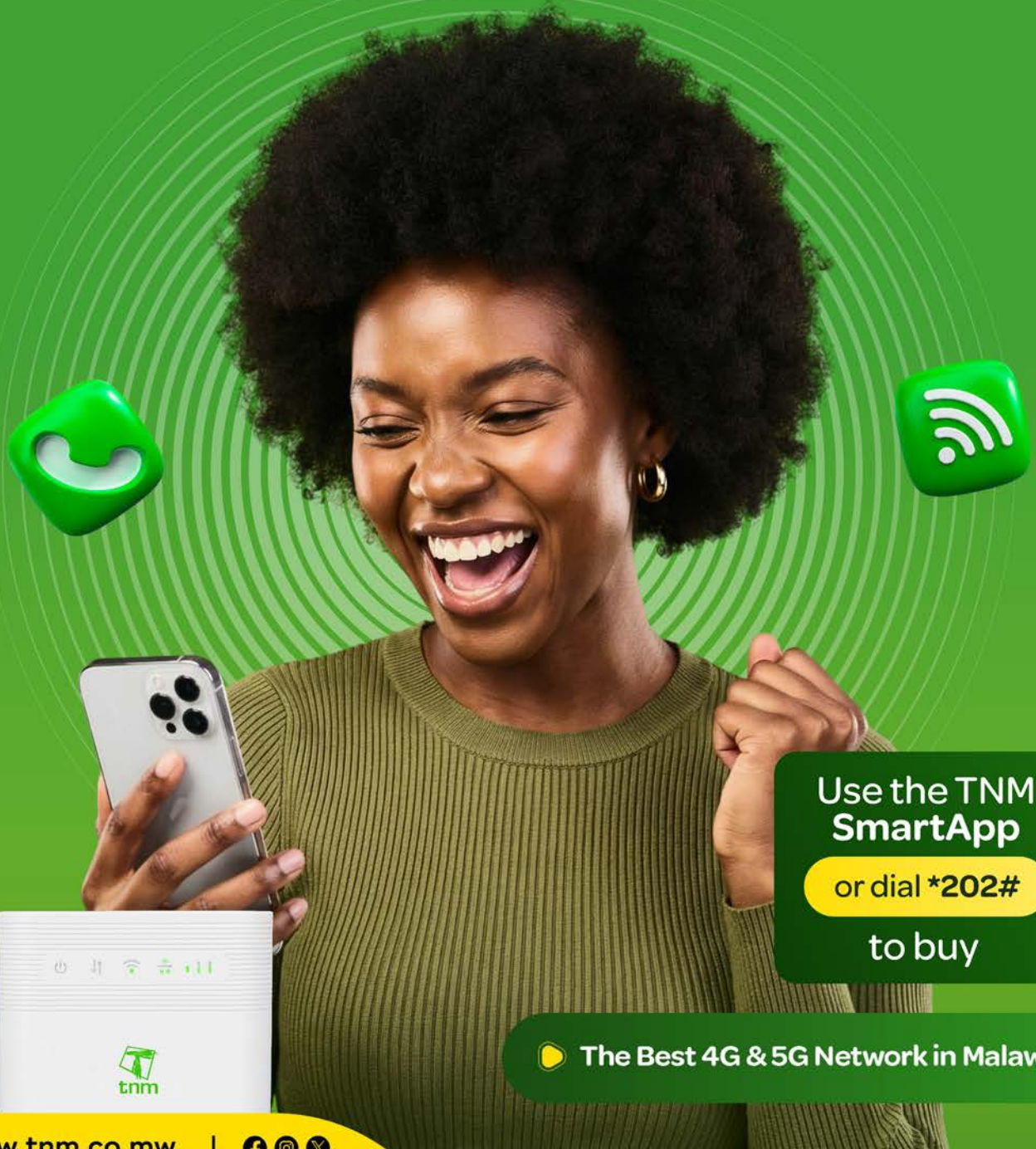
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stanley Chiyora is a dynamic marketing and communications professional with diverse experience in the industry. This article represents his personal views and opinions.



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