

PROFILE: Herbert Mensah

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Herbert Mensah, an alumnus of Sussex University in the UK, is a self-made, highly



successful businessman who has also developed and produced some of the biggest and most memorable media extravaganzas in Ghana.

A major driving force of Herbert's, namely a passion to play a significant role in the development of Africa, has led him to become involved in the arena of sports management, in which he has employed his leadership, charisma and resources to change the face of football in Ghana, and continues to do so, while also championing the growth of one of Ghana's less obvious sports, rugby.

In his quest to make a significant contribution to the development of Africa, he has also initiated various ongoing research and development projects ranging from renewable energy to regional economic cooperation ventures.

Leading the cellular phone industry in Africa

Before cellular telephony came to the continent of Africa, Herbert read the market trends and positioned himself to take advantage of this life-changing technology. This foresight resulted in Herbert becoming the biggest mobile handset distributor between 1992 and 2006 in sub-Saharan Africa outside South Africa when he led the market with distributorships for Motorola, Sony Ericsson and Nokia.

Between 2005 and 2007, Herbert also established a state-of-the-art Level 3 Motorola and Nokia-certified mobile phone and repair centre in Accra, Ghana, to fill the void of after-sales support created by most manufacturers.

Anticipating and exploiting major opportunities



The 1994 elections in South Africa spelled unprecedented opportunities for African businessmen who could pre-empt these developments. Herbert identified the spread of M-Net, a South African digital satellite TV network, into Africa and managed to negotiate the position as country manager for Ghana. This allowed him to develop and implement some of the biggest extravaganzas experienced in Ghana, including:

Face-of-Africa finals in Ghana (1998/1999). This fashion model search and selection event was covered by international media, with stars from throughout the world, including The Emotions, Akosua Busia, Meiway, Oswald Boateng, Miss Universe and a host of international modelling and beauty celebrities.

M-Net African Showcase (1995). Under Herbert's tenure the biggest African Fashion and music extravaganza, dubbed the M-Net African Showcase, was organised in Accra. It brought the stars together – among them guest of honour Zindzi Mandela, daughter of Nelson Mandela.

Max Brito Charity Extravaganza (1996). Max Brito of Ivory Coast was paralysed during the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa. On the recommendation of Herbert, the biggest charity sports extravaganza ever was organised with M-Net as sponsors. The British and South African national rugby teams were brought to Ghana and substantial funds were generated to support Brito and other less fortunate sports stars in Ghana.



Between 1995 and 2000, Herbert represented the BBC in Ghana, with the responsibility of liaising with the media and government on all aspects of radio programming and recommendations on marketing and PR matters.

Investing in Africa's development through sport and the youth

Rebuilding Kumasi Asante Kotoko



In 1999, Herbert was appointed chairman of Kumasi Asante Kotoko by the then King of the Ashantis, Opoku Ware II. At that stage the football club had, for all practical purposes, disintegrated. Herbert devised a five-year strategic plan that would ensure excellence both on and off the field. This ambitious plan included the introduction of international coaches, development of professional training facilities, sourcing of sponsorships, development of revenue sources through a club-owned newspaper and other supporter-driven initiatives. The development of a modern centre of excellence and stadium for the club was on the cards when Herbert's

tenure ended in 2003. In December of the preceding year, Kotoko were runners-up in the African Cup Winners Cup (now the Confederation Cup).

It is generally acknowledged Herbert's involvement with Kotoko set the tone for many changes in Ghanaian football and indeed in changing the face of sports administration in Ghana.

Sports and Marketing Management Consultancy



SOS (Strategic Outsourcing Solutions) Networkx was established by Herbert in 2004 with the objective of providing professional management services to football clubs on the continent. The essence of the consultancy can be found in its international network of technical, medical and marketing resources.

In 2004, SOS Networkx managed to acquire the services of German international coach Ernst Middendorp on behalf of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club, to assist them in their quest for success in CAF African tournaments. The club went on to win its first ever CAF Confederation Cup that year.

Other Business Developments

Herbert continues to pursue the philosophy that Africa generally and Ghana specifically provide huge opportunities that are currently subject to feasibility studies initiated by him. The most important of these include:

Ghana Gateway Project

Herbert has always held the view that Ghana is strategically in an excellent position to fulfil a more important role in African and world economics. The country is geographically about six hours from Europe, the USA, Dubai and South Africa. It boasts a stable and business-friendly environment, with English as its main language.

Herbert has therefore initiated research to formalise a concrete proposal to fulfil the true potential of Ghana in its role as the gateway to the sub-region.



Xfm 95.1 and Other Media Channels

As a professional marketing and media specialist, Herbert has always shown a keen interest in investing in new media channels to reach the youth in Ghana.

This interest led to the establishment of media channels such as the Kotoko Express during his period as Chairman of Kumasi Asante Kotoko, Xfm 95.1, an Accra-based FM radio station, and various other online media channels.

Championing May 9th celebrations since 2001



Friday the 9th of May 2016 marked the 15th anniversary of one of the world's worst tragic stadium disasters in history, when 126 young football supporters lost their lives needlessly during a football match between Accra Hearts of Oak (Hearts of Oak) and Kumasi Asante Kotoko (Kotoko) at the Accra Sports Stadium.

Since the tragedy of 2001, Herbert, the then chairman of Kotoko, has made it a point to walk that extra mile to arrange special activities to remember that tragic event and provide ongoing support to the families of the victims. In 2016, the event was even more special after he invited and paid for the participation of two young South Africans who had been affected by a similar tragedy in South Africa, the Ellis Park disaster of 2001. The participants, a young man who lost both parents, and a woman who lost her father, were deeply affected by the experience of meeting people with similar stories so far away from home, where the Ellis Park disaster is largely not commemorated and remembered every year.

President of the Ghana Rugby Football Association

Herbert is also a keen rugby enthusiast and has actively taken part in rugby, playing for the following teams.

- Sussex University
- Lewes (Sussex Champions)
- Sussex (County)
- Old Hararians (Zimbabwe)
- Mashonaland (Provincial – Zimbabwe)
- Saracens
- Ghana

His rugby highlight was when he played for Zimbabwe and scored the winning try against Italy. He was also part of the Saracens team that won the London Merit table.

Herbert was actively involved in the development of rugby in Ghana, highlighted by the Max Brito event in Accra when he brought the British and South African national rugby teams to Ghana and generated substantial funds to support Brito and other less fortunate sports stars in Ghana.

On 5 June 2014 Mr. Herbert Mensah was elected president of the Ghana Rugby Association (GRA), operating as the Ghana Rugby Football Union, a position he continues to hold.

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