

A Review by
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AGENCY:
Image Merchants Promotion

CLIENT: *Nigeria Customs Service*

TITLE:
Impactful PR in Customs Service

SUMMARY

The appointment of a public relations practitioner, Mr Wale Adeniyi as the acting Comptroller General of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), provided an opportunity of deploying PR tools as management function for awareness creation, stakeholders' collaboration and citizenry compliance to customs reforms.

The campaign ensured wider publicity, citizenry goodwill and massive supports of stakeholders within two years of the new boss that enhanced stakeholder collaboration, ensured border security and boosted revenue generation.

It was not surprising that after the successful rebranding campaign, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu confirmed the appointment of Adeniyi as the substantive Comptroller General of Customs after 100 days of acting and later extended his tenure after two years in office.



BACKGROUND

- Acting Appointment: On assumption of office, the newly elected Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, appointed a public relations specialist in the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) to serve as acting Comptroller General pending the appointment of substantive chief executive officer.
- The appointment of a new Controller of Customs is a pivotal moment that requires clear communication to stakeholders—government, trade partners, staff, media, and the public. The plan ensures transparency, builds credibility, and positions the Controller as a reform-minded leader.
- Within the last two years, CG Bashir Adewale Adeniyi has been a living demonstration that public relations is leadership. His communication-oriented style did not merely complement reforms—it drove them. Through transparency, engagement, empathy, and strategic storytelling, he increased revenue, modernised operations, strengthened security, reformed the institution, transformed public perception and created a blueprint for public sector communication in Nigeria

DCG Wale Adeniyi Takes over as Acting Customs Boss

By [Prnigeria](#) - June 20, 2023



Wale Adeniyi acting Customs boss

DCG Wale Adeniyi Takes over as Acting Customs Boss

The former National Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Wale Adeniyi, has assumed duties as the new Comptroller-General of Customs, in an Acting role.

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PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

1. **Poor Public Perception:** The CG inherited an institution burdened by reputational damage, stemming from allegations of corruption, inefficiency, and procedural delays. Restoring trust remains a critical hurdle.
2. **Trade Facilitation vs. Revenue Drive:** Customs faces the dual challenge of sustaining the nation's heavy reliance on revenue collection while meeting demands for faster, more transparent cross-border trade. Striking this balance is a persistent tension.
3. **Resistance to Technology & Modernisation:** Efforts to introduce automation and digital tools encounter resistance from officers accustomed to manual operations, slowing the pace of modernisation.
4. **Competing Stakeholder Expectations:** Customs must navigate the diverse and often conflicting expectations of importers, exporters, clearing agents, government agencies, and the general public, each with unique priorities.
5. **Weak Workforce Morale under Compliance Pressure:** Intensified reforms and stricter compliance measures have created anxiety among officers, undermining morale and potentially affecting performance.



APPROACHES FOR THE CAMPAIGN

Approaches for the Program:

In ensuring seamless and well-coordinated approaches, the following PR tools were used

- **Media Relations:** Press coverage and media engagement on initiatives and reforms for awareness creation and sensitisation campaigns
- **Stakeholders Engagement:** Regular engagements with major stakeholders for interagency collaboration, public support and early warning against breaching the law
- **Event Management:** Special events and programmes were hosted in well well-organised manner for lively exchanges and fruit deliberations and resolutions for efficiency in customs service.
- **Crisis Communication:** In crises, special strategies of engagement and communication were deployed mostly through third-party narratives
- **Reputation Management:** Because the reputation of the new government was at stake, various element of perception management were considered for creating goodwill for the new administration.



OPPORTUNITY:

- **PR as Management Function**
- The appointment of a Public Relations specialist as Acting Comptroller-General of Customs created a unique opportunity to showcase the strategic value of PR as a high-level managerial function.
- Public Relations, when positioned at the core of leadership, enables an organisation to build and sustain strong relationships with its key publics and stakeholders through effective, transparent communication.
- By prioritising communication, Customs fosters long-term trust, enhances stakeholder satisfaction, and strengthens institutional credibility.
- This appointment was therefore both timely and strategic, aligning leadership with the need for efficiency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement.



OBJECTIVES OF THE PR CAMPAIGN

1. Establish Credibility - Position the Controller as transparent, reform-driven, and approachable.
2. Promote Policy Priorities - Highlight modernization, efficiency, and anti-corruption measures.
3. Build Stakeholder Confidence - Reassure trade partners and the public of fair, predictable customs processes.
4. Enhance Internal Alignment - Inspire staff to embrace reforms and uphold integrity.
5. Strengthen International Image - Showcase compliance with global trade standards (WTO, WCO).



LOCATION AND ENDORSEMENTS

Geographic Location:

Nigeria

Target Audience:

Stakeholders

Border Communities

Policy Makers

Media

Foreign Investors,

Sponsor:

Nigeria Customs Service

Supported

Nigerian Institute of Public Relations
(NIPR)

Communications Tactics:

Media Relations

Stakeholders Engagement

Crisis Communication

Event Management

Creative Solution:

With a stake in ensuring the retention of its member, the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) strategically used its networks and platforms to promote the activities and accomplishments of the acting CGC Wale Adeniyi for better understanding and acknowledgement

Difficulty eliminated:

Rather than engaging opposition elements on some of the initiatives and reforms, subtle third-party advocacy were deployed, especially in crisis communication



OUTCOMES

1. Record-Breaking Revenue Collection

- 2023: NCS crossed the ₦3 trillion mark, collecting ₦3.2 trillion in revenue.
- 2024: Revenue surged to ₦6.105 trillion, surpassing the target of ₦5.079 trillion by 20.2% — a 90.4% increase from 2023.
- 2025 (Q1): Already collected ₦1.75 trillion, exceeding the quarterly target by ₦106.5 billion (29.96% growth compared to Q1 2024).
- October 2024 marked the highest monthly collection in NCS history at ₦603.17 billion.

2. Trade Facilitation & Modernization

- Processed imports worth ₦60.29 trillion in 2024, a 117% increase from 2023.
- Export volume grew by 234% in 2024, reaching 12.35 billion kilograms.
- Deployment of the indigenous B'Odogwu customs clearance platform, which streamlined transactions and boosted efficiency.
- Expansion of digital automation and risk management systems, reducing clearance times and revenue leakages.
- Implementation of the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme to strengthen compliance and stakeholder trust.

OUTCOMES

3. Enforcement & Anti-Smuggling

- 2024: Duty Paid Value (DPV) of seizures rose by 100.92%, totaling ₦35.29 billion.
- Seizures included: 183,000 bags of rice, 900 firearms and 113,000 rounds of ammunition, Illegal pharmaceuticals and narcotics worth ₦3.04 billion, 76 wildlife trafficking cases valued at ₦5.93 billion.
- 2025 Q1: 298 seizures valued at ₦7.7 billion, including rice, petroleum products, narcotics, textiles, and wildlife items

4. Policy & Economic Support

- Introduced targeted import duty exemptions on essential food items (rice, maize, sorghum), helping reduce food prices by 12–18% in Q1 2025.
- Granted strategic concessions worth ₦1.68 trillion in 2024 to stimulate industrial growth and support businesses.
- Strengthened collaboration with government agencies under the AfCFTA framework to boost Nigeria's competitiveness.



OUTCOMES

5. Institutional Development

- Launched Customs Cares, a CSR initiative to build public trust.
- Established the Nigeria Customs Service University for Trade and Technology to enhance capacity building.
- Improved transparency and stakeholder engagement through regular press briefings and open governance initiatives.



MEDIA REVIEWS ON THE CAMPAIGN

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Customs pledges B'Odogwu platform upgrade for trade ease

<https://thesun.ng/customs-pledges-bodogwu-platform-upgrade-for-trade-ease/>

Nigeria Customs Begins Sensitisation On Cargo Clearance Automation

<https://von.gov.ng/nigerian-custom-service-begins-sensitisation-on-cargo-clearance-automation/>

Nigeria Customs Launches CVMS Platform to Modernise Vehicle Imports and Support EV Adoption <https://234drive.com/nigeria-customs-launches-cvms-platform/>

Nigeria's African trades hit N4.82tr in first half 2025

<https://thenationonlineng.net/nigerias-african-trades-hit-n4-82tr-in-first-half-2025/>

Customs surpasses 2024 revenue target by 20.2%

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/01/customs-surpasses-2024-revenue-target-by-20-2/>

Appraising CG Adeniyi's milestone transformation of Nigerian Customs

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/01/appraising-cg-adeniyis-milestone-transformation-of-nigerian-customs/>

ACHIEVEMENTS

Nigeria Customs Service outlines 2025 strategic priorities, highlights 2024 achievements <https://govbusinessjournal.com/nigeria-customs-service-outlines-2025-strategic-priorities-highlights-2024-achievements/>

Two Years of Transformation: Unpacking Wale Adeniyi's Impact on Nigeria's Customs Service <https://decisionmakers.com.ng/two-years-of-transformation-unpacking-wale-adeniyis-impact-on-nigerias-customs-service/>

Nigeria's Customs CG, Adeniyi, elected WCO chairperson

<https://punchng.com/nigerias-customs-cg-adeniyi-elected-wco-chairperson/>

President Tinubu Extends the Tenure of the Comptroller-General of Customs

<https://statehouse.gov.ng/president-tinubu-extends-the-tenure-of-the-comptroller-general-of-customs/>

Leap in Customs Achievements Under Wale Adeniyi, By Abdulwahab Isa

<https://economicconfidential.com/leap-customs-adeniyi/>

Adewale Adeniyi: Repositioning Nigeria Customs Service for efficiency

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/04/adewale-adeniyi-repositioning-nigeria-customs-service-for-efficiency/>