

2026 - A YEAR OF EXCELLENCE



Jambo!

We enter 2026 at a defining crossroads. In an era of shrinking attention spans and accelerating disruption, influence, the power to shape opinion and inspire action, has become the most valuable asset any leader, brand, or nation can wield, yet it is also more complex than ever, evolving at breakneck speed amid new technologies, shifting global alliances, and rising ethical challenges. As economies reposition within a new multilateral order, attracting investment, strengthening trade, and driving sustainable growth now demand sharper, more intentional influence building capabilities. Success will not rest on persuasion alone, but on integrity, ensuring that growth is anchored in transparency, trust, and truth. In this first edition of the year, we recommit to equipping leaders with the insights, tools, and Influence Code needed to drive real impact responsibly, strategically, and at speed.



Lessons from Davos for Africa's Financial Leaders

For one week in January, a quiet Alpine town became the centre of the world. From January 19 to 23, Davos hosted the 56th World Economic Forum, bringing together nearly 3,000 leaders from over 130 countries including heads of state, policymakers and global business executives to shape the conversations defining our future.

Discussions at the forum focused on artificial intelligence, climate finance, and the future of work, with Africa's participation shaped by its demographic reality and growth potential. With over 60 percent of Africans under 25 and Africa projected to account for one in four people globally by 2030, speakers underscored the importance of integrating this young population into global value chains through sectors such as education, technology, agriculture, minerals, and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

For African businesses, Davos offered several practical lessons.

- First, demographic change must be treated as a strategic input rather than a background statistic. Businesses need to actively plan for a younger, more urban, and increasingly digital population by designing products, services, and employment models that reflect this reality.
- Second, closing the artificial intelligence and education gap emerged as an urgent priority. As artificial intelligence reshapes productivity and labour markets globally, African businesses must invest in skills
- Third, infrastructure remains foundational. This extends beyond physical assets to include digital infrastructure, data systems, and institutional frameworks that support scale, efficiency, and trust, all of which are essential for attracting both local and international capital.
- Finally, growth strategies must align with evolving global expectations around transparency, governance, and climate responsibility. Investors are increasingly assessing not only financial performance, but also how businesses manage risk, report impact, and contribute to sustainable development.

Africa's visibility at Davos through platforms such as Africa Collective Davos and Nigeria's country house signalled growing global openness to African led ideas, partnerships, and investments.

In this evolving landscape, the ability to interpret global signals and communicate them with clarity has become increasingly important for African businesses. Organisations that are able to articulate their value with credibility, align their narratives with investor and regulatory expectations, and support their stories with data are better positioned to attract capital, partnerships, and long term trust. As global standards continue to evolve, thoughtful, consistent storytelling is emerging as a quiet differentiator between businesses that are visible and those that are investment ready.

INFLUENCE INSIGHT

From Silence to Strategy: How Khaby Lama Turned Influence into Equity



What happens when influence stops being a personal asset and starts operating like a scalable business?

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Beyond the headline numbers, the significance lies in what this model unlocks. With over 160 million followers on TikTok and earnings estimated at 20 million dollars in 2024, Lama has effectively converted attention into infrastructure. His future value is now tied to systems, data, and long term performance rather than algorithmic visibility or one off brand deals.

For African founders and executives, this reframes how growth should be designed. Popularity, reach, or market traction only become valuable when they are structured into assets investors can evaluate. Ownership, governance, and scalable operating models are no longer optional add ons, they are central to valuation and longevity.

For businesses, the shift is from campaigns to platforms. Brands that invest early in data, distribution, and repeatable revenue engines are better positioned to attract capital and partnerships than those built solely on visibility. The emphasis moves from short term buzz to sustainable commercial ecosystems.

For creatives, the signal is equally powerful. Influence is a starting point, not the destination. The opportunity now lies in building entities that can license, automate, and scale creativity beyond individual output, geography, or time.

From a PR and communications perspective, this evolution demands a different kind of storytelling. As creators and businesses increasingly think in terms of equity and scale, communication must move beyond hype to credibility, clarity, and future readiness. Those who learn to articulate not just who they are, but what they are building, will be the ones best positioned for the next phase of global relevance.

TREND WATCH

Attention, Algorithm: Everything You Need to Know in 2026



In 2026, influence is no longer driven by who posts the most, but by who earns attention the longest. Social media algorithms now reward relevance, depth, and credibility, creating a powerful opportunity for CEOs and CMOs to lead conversations rather than chase reach.



On **LinkedIn**, visibility is built through authority. The algorithm prioritizes content that sparks meaningful discussion, making executive thought leadership a strategic asset. Leaders who share clear perspectives on industry challenges, policy shifts, or growth opportunities, and actively engage in the comments, signal expertise and trust. For CMOs, this means shaping narratives that position the organization as a problem-solver, not a promoter.



On **X (formerly Twitter)**, influence is driven by timeliness and conversation. CEOs who respond to real-time industry moments, economic developments, or societal issues can shape narratives as they unfold. The platform favors posts that invite dialogue, making it ideal for leaders to test ideas, clarify positions, and demonstrate agility. Strategic amplification ensures key messages reach decision-makers beyond organic networks.



On **Instagram**, leadership visibility is increasingly visual and intentional. Algorithms reward content that holds attention, carousels, short videos, and clear storytelling. For executives, this is less about aesthetics and more about humanizing leadership: showing decision-making moments, impact stories, or behind-the-scenes perspectives that reinforce brand credibility.

Ultimately, these changes mean influence strategies must be PR-led, platform-aware, and data-informed. Brands and institutions that align leadership messaging with algorithmic behavior don't just gain reach; they shape perception, trust, and authority.

MONTHLY SECTOR DISGEST

Africa's Health Beat: AI, Vaccines, and Big Budget Moves Shaping the Continent

Africa's healthcare landscape is evolving fast, with breakthroughs in technology, bold government investments, and urgent responses to disease outbreaks shaping the way communities access care. From AI chatbots in Nigeria to locally made vaccines in South Africa, here's a snapshot of the top stories making waves across the continent.

Big bet on AI to fix health care gaps

A \$50million Gates Foundation–OpenAI partnership called Horizon1000 is rolling out AI tools to support clinics in Rwanda and beyond, aiming to speed up diagnostics, lighten workloads, and bridge major health worker shortages in under-resourced systems.

Nigeria turns to digital therapy amid care shortfalls

With only a few hundred psychiatrists for more than 240million people, Nigerians are increasingly turning to AI chatbots for mental health support, offering 24/7 emotional guidance that many can't get from traditional services, though experts warn tech isn't a full substitute for trained clinicians.

Morocco hikes health funding after public pressure

In a strategic shift responding to youth led calls for better services, Morocco's 2026 budget earmarks about \$15billion for health and education, a roughly 16percent increase aimed at strengthening care infrastructure and reducing regional inequalities.

Regional efforts to secure vaccines and fight outbreaks

Across Africa, public health groups and partners continue working to improve mpox vaccine access, with additional allocations and support flowing into hard-hit countries even as funding and logistics challenges persist across the continent's varied health systems.

As Africa's healthcare sector transforms, these developments are more than just health stories. They are signals for businesses, investors, and communicators. For PR and communications professionals, the rise of AI tools, vaccine innovations, and increased public investment presents opportunities to shape narratives around trust, innovation, and social impact. Companies operating in health, technology, and finance can leverage these trends to build thought leadership, demonstrate social responsibility, and connect with communities in meaningful ways. For investors, the surge in local innovation, from AI health platforms in Nigeria to vaccine production in South Africa, highlights emerging markets ripe for strategic partnerships, funding, and sustainable growth. In short, Africa's healthcare sector is not just saving lives, it's creating new avenues for influence, investment, and impact.

South Africa builds its own livestock vaccine

Responding to one of its worst outbreaks in years, South Africa has launched its first locally developed foot and mouth disease vaccine in two decades, a boost for domestic production that could reduce reliance on imports and strengthen resilience against future outbreaks.

Mpox continues to circulate across the continent

Mpox transmission persists in at least 17 African countries, with thousands of confirmed cases and dozens of deaths reported over recent weeks, prompting health officials to keep surveillance and response efforts high even as global emergency labels have evolved.



WEBICAST OF THE MONTH

Influence in a Fragmented World: What Global Leaders Must Understand in 2026

Influence today looks nothing like it did even a few years ago. Trust is no longer assumed. Audiences are more sceptical, more fragmented, and less loyal. At the same time, artificial intelligence is accelerating how narratives are created, shared, and challenged, forcing leaders to rethink credibility, reputation, and engagement in real time.

This reality framed the conversation at Global Influence Insights for 2026, convened by The Newmark Group, where senior practitioners from Africa, Europe, the United States, and China explored how influence is evolving across regions and what leaders must do differently to remain relevant. What emerged clearly is that influence is no longer about visibility alone. It is about context, consistency, and credibility in an increasingly complex global environment. [Watch Here](#)

Webinar zoom newmark PRGN Influence XXI

THEME:
Global Influence Insights for 2026
Redefining Influence, Trust & Engagement

Tuesday January 27, 2026
1PM GMT | 2PM WAT | 4PM EAT

Lovelyn Okafor
Country Lead,
Newmark Nigeria
Moderator

Gilbert Manirakiza
CEO of Newmark Group

Natalie Chidotti
Founder/CEO, Chidotti
PRGN Americas
Regional VP

Marisa Toro
Co-Founder & Managing
Partner - Marlow Insight
PRGN EMEA Regional VP

Shawn JIANG X.
Founder of China Advocate
PRGN APAC Regional VP

Register now and be part of a strategic, insightful, and practical discussion shaping the future of global influence, communication, and leadership.

<https://bit.ly/GlobalInfluenceInsights2026>

SCAN NOW

MONTHLY THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Nation Branding in a Multipolar World: Competing Narratives and Global Attention

In today's multipolar world, global influence is no longer measured by armies or GDP alone. It depends on attention, credibility, and the ability to tell your own story. Nations compete in a crowded, fragmented media landscape where perception often outweighs reality. Strategic storytelling is essential, shaping a country's power, partnerships, and role in the global conversation.

As power spreads across regions and narratives multiply, losing control over national identity carries significant risk. Countries that fail to define who they are and what they stand for can be framed by crisis, caricature, or rivals. Nation branding is therefore a strategic act of clarity, aligning policy, values, and actions into a credible narrative that builds trust, attracts opportunity, and sustains influence. [Read More](#)



THE INFLUENCE FORUM

As 2026 begins, Newmark is setting the tone for a season of bold thinking and forward looking conversations. Across our platforms, the Growth Code is quietly taking shape, offering insights from our ongoing growth focused campaigns and reflections on how influence, relevance, and credibility are being redefined. This is the opening movement of a bigger story, one that signals where conversations around public relations, leadership, and impact are headed this year.

At its core, this moment speaks to a global idea that has shaped the industry for decades. A time dedicated to examining the role of public relations in shaping narratives, strengthening relationships, and driving trust across societies and markets. It is about influence with purpose, communication with intent, and the power of ideas to move people, institutions, and industries forward. This context sets the foundation for why the coming months matter and why attention now is essential.

The signals are becoming clearer. A major global moment is coming to Nigeria in July. This is the time to stay close, pay attention, and remain connected to the conversations unfolding across our channels. Something significant is building, and it is not a moment you want to miss. [See More.](#)

African Global Investment Submit

The world's most undervalued continent just opened for business at scale.

Last week I attended the launch of the Global Africa Investment Summit, and what I witnessed wasn't just another event. It was the formalization of Africa's arrival as the defining investment frontier of the 21st century.

The room told the story before a single presentation was made. President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania. President John Mahama of Ghana. President Joao Lourenco of Angola and Chair of the African Union. Prime Minister Maria Benvinda Levy of Mozambique. These leaders didn't show up with speeches about potential. They came with sovereign assets ready to be structured for global capital.

Behind this vision stands Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, whose track record as President of the African Development Bank already reshaped how the world finances Africa's growth. With GAIS, he's building a globally trusted platform that structures trillions in sovereign assets into de-risked, investment-ready portfolios. [Read More](#)



WORD FROM THE CEO



A Message from Gilbert Manirakiza: Navigating the New World Order

We begin 2026 at a historic crossroads. The shift toward a multilateral "new world order" demands that aid-dependent economies rapidly diversify. Attracting investment and forex is now a survival priority, requiring governments and brands to work in lockstep to make trade deals deliver results. Fast!

However, success depends on superior influence-building capabilities—expertise that remains unevenly distributed. This is why InfluenceXXI is accelerating the release of tools and trainings to equip leaders with the "Influence Code."

Crucially, influence is the ultimate force multiplier, scaling both progress and peril. As deepfakes and AI-driven misinformation accelerate manipulation, the ethical foundation of our craft is paramount. Influence can build nations, but without a moral compass, it dismantles truth. Our mission is not just the mastery of persuasion, but the integrity of the message, ensuring we drive growth through transparency and sustained trust. In 2026, our collective resolve to achieve this will be tested.



The Newmark Group is an award-winning global firm specializing in Brand Influence, Experiential Management and Business Consulting services. We leverage the expertise of a global team of experts across Africa, Asia, Europe and America to deliver human-centered, AI-augmented and insights-driven strategies that always hit the bulls-eye.