

Hubtel@20: Utilise digital innovation to create employment for youth — Minister

By Justice Agbenorsi

INDIGENOUS companies operating in the technology sector have been challenged to utilise digital innovation to support the efforts the government is making to reduce unemployment.

At the 20th anniversary thanksgiving dinner of Hubtel in Accra, one of Africa's leading payment services providers, the Minister of Youth and Development, George Opare-Addo, said the companies could do so by investing heavily in digital skills development, mentorship and entrepreneurship support. "To efficiently tackle unemployment, we need to fully utilise digital innovation in every sphere of our lives.

"We need more companies teaching coding, training digital marketers, funding youth-led startups and offering internships to grow the capacity of our youth. It is the surest way of empowering them in this digital-fuelled world," he said.

Anniversary

The anniversary celebration of the company that commenced operations in 2005 as a simple text message service provider serving alumni associations and funeral attendees, among others, saw staff, clients, management, well-wishers and other stakeholders converge on Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City Accra to thank God and celebrate the company's milestone.

The anniversary, centred on the theme: "Connecting businesses to communities", was also to chart a new path for the company's future in the evolving technology industry.

Veteran gospel music group, Daughters of Glorious Jesus and ace gospel musicians Joe Mettle and Piesie Esther, took turns to thrill the audience with melodious music at the all-white attire ceremony.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, proposed a toast to wind up the celebration of the company founded by three graduates on the campus of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science

and Technology. Hubtel has since evolved into a company with the potential to become Ghana's first tech unicorn.

Currently, the company serves over 8,000 businesses, 12 million customers and works with 932 delivery riders across eight cities in the country.

Future

Mr Opare-Addo commended Hubtel for not building a business over the last 20 years but for shaping and building futures, adding, "Companies like Hubtel are very important because of the way they have redefined the job market over recent years.

"Hubtel's story also reminds us that when you invest in young people, you invest in Ghana's future. Many of the brilliant minds who helped shape Hubtel's success are young Ghanaians; products of our educational system," he added.

The Minister of Youth and Development gave an assurance that the government was committed to working hand in hand with forward-thinking companies such as Hubtel to expand

digital literacy and, by extension, create more jobs for Ghanaians.

Growth

The Minister of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Samuel Nartey George, said that at every stage of the nation's digital growth, Hubtel had not just been a participant but a leader.

"I am in no doubt that the Hubtel story highlights a major fact we should all be proud of as Ghanaians. It speaks to the power of local innovation and that Ghanaian talent can compete at the highest levels. The founders are a reminder that you do not have to leave Ghana to achieve greatness," he added.

Mr George said Hubtel had been able to turn opportunities into platforms, ideas into businesses and challenges into solutions.

"Hubtel has shown that when we invest in our own dreams and our people, the results are world-class," he said.

Two decades

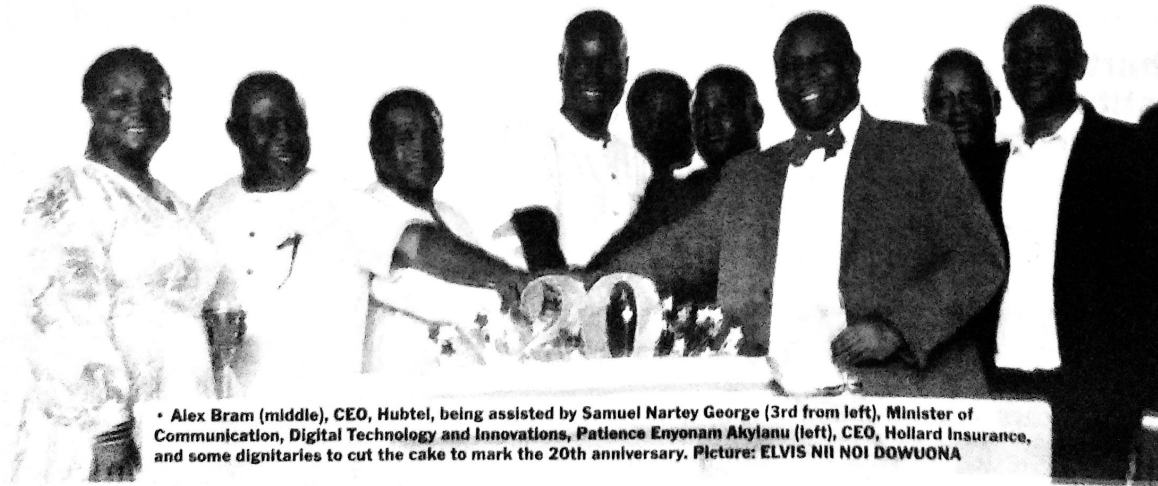
Reflecting on the past two decades in an emotive speech, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hubtel, Alex Bram, recounted how the company navigated through uncertainty in the changing phases of technology development from a small business that made GHe6,000 in its formative years as revenue.

In what he described as a note to God, Mr Bram said even though the company faced storms and competitors with greater resources, God had been there to help them rebuild after every setback.

"You helped us to listen more closely to our customers and find clarity in our purpose," he said.

Mr Bram called for continued guidance in the next chapter of Hubtel's journey, urging everyone to remain focused on innovation and impact.

"Let us be a bastion of hope for young graduates, start-ups and established businesses," he added.



• Alex Bram (middle), CEO, Hubtel, being assisted by Samuel Nartey George (3rd from left), Minister of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Patience Enyonam Akyilanu (left), CEO, Hollard Insurance, and some dignitaries to cut the cake to mark the 20th anniversary. Picture: ELVIS NII NOI DOWUONA