

**TOWARDS INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN ENTERTAINMENT SPACE: MOSAIC THEATRE PRODUCTIONS ABUJA IN PERSPECTIVE.**

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**Abstract**

While several privately owned entertainment companies especially in the mimetic arts struggle to thrive in an era of seemingly intractable inflation, some others are consolidating on their success stories by delving into new genres of entertainment with verifiable success rate. It is worthy of study to ascertain the role of innovative management as part of the secrets to their success. But there are limited studies on the effects of innovative management as a driving factor in the success of mimetic entertainment outfits in Abuja, Nigeria. The main objective of this qualitative study is to ascertain the extent of the possible effects of innovative management on the processes of planning and presenting their arts to the general public using the Mosaic Theatre production as a criterion due to its level of consistent success. The data were generated through Key Informant interview that involved the leadership of the Mosaic Theatre Productions team. The generated data were analysed using thematic table that selected certain themes and how they were deployed by the entertainment outfit under study. The study now reveals that the success of this outfit is traceable to an intentional quest to remain relevant on the internet space through innovatively packaged processes like online auditioning alongside digital marketing of both stage plays and movies. It also reveals that the entire success of the firm is partly traceable to strategic partnership that helps it minimize the cost of production while delving into other genres like virtual reality games. The findings recommend that the success of mimetic entertainment producers majorly depends on the type of strategic partnerships they form within and beyond the arts; their ability to align with the internet-aligned modus of planning and presenting performances while ensuring that their products and the production processes are intentionally designed to be consumer-centred.

**Evolution of Innovative Management**

Innovative management chronologically evolved from the survivalist instinct of humans. Initially it existed as a closed concept but development and paradigm shifts eventually opened it up. Several scholarly attempts have been made to document the chronological evolution of the concept which came in periods covering over three centuries. Such is not the essence of this research because it will alter the focal scope of this study. Summarizing the loopholes based on the phases of their chronological appearances, innovative management was a result of technological advancement in the first phase when there was little or no attention on either the market or the consumers. In the second phase, market pull takes over from technology push but there was lack of feedback. The third phase sees the effect of feedbacks leading to integration of R&D with marketing etc. The fourth phase only we have interactive before it moves to the network in the fifth phase (Tohidi and Jabbari, 577). This implies that the improvement of periods in history were all dependent on the problems they sought to solve. This means that there are multiple approaches to effective innovative management in contemporary times thereby upholding the argument that there is no sacrosanct single approach to innovation (Trott, 2). The implication of this view justifies why in the final stage of open innovation, a fusion of internal and external ideas birthed the open innovation which signals a major ideological shift and advancement. (Ramakrishnan, 21). This premise underscores the place of diffused approach to innovative management which is very highly decentralized in nature.

### **Levels of Innovative Management processes**

The nature of innovative management makes it a critical task that influences the holistic nature of a brand. It really involves several components both within and beyond the company walls. (Wozniak, 2015) classified the concept into three levels namely:

- Strategic Level
- Tactical Level
- Operational Level

These three levels are exemplified in the following order:

- i. **Strategic Level:** This level focuses more on the decision that determine the company's direction of policies regarding the results of previously conducted assessments and consumer expectations regarding their preferences. It considers objectives of creating new designs, new technologies/modifications, readjustment in marketing and patterns that guarantee overall effective functioning. This is because a successful long-term development of modern enterprise requires the correct formation and optimal use of the effective strategic management system of its innovative activity (Khrystyna et al., 95).
- ii. **Tactical Level:** The detailed planning which ensure that current activity change will be holistically done in a manner the changes are felt in all aspects of the company. This level explains why there is need for thorough development of new products and services alongside the planning and supervise the executional phases (Wozniak, 5).
- iii. **Operational Level:** This level streamlines the control of production processes. The detailing at this point is such that guarantees adherence to the recommendations of the research that triggered the innovation(s). It implies that having robust operational strategies can improve customer satisfaction through consistent delivery of quality products and services, thereby building a strong brand reputation (Srirangam, 1).

### **Evaluating Innovative Management in the Nigeria Entertainment Sector**

#### **Film**

Entertainment is one of the major areas that has witnessed obvious manifestation of innovative management in recent times in Nigeria. This stems from the fact that there is an obvious paradigm shift from analogous form of entertainment to the internet-based digital form of content creation and dissemination. The trend which started in more advanced climes of Europe and America is having an unprecedented success rate in Nigeria. The Nigeria film industry steadily grows in leaps and bounds. It is estimated to employ more than one million people annually. Its revived cinema is growing at an unanticipated pace nationwide (Osinubi, 27). The above indicates a major growth which is a departure from the anomaly characterizing the industry two decades ago. That was an era in which the initial challenges of conventional marketing alongside rigid patterns of movie production processes devoid of any technologically driven innovation alongside policy formulation and execution contributed to the relatively stalled advancement of the Nollywood industry (Madichie, 19) If this was the trend less than two decades, what really changed that birthed the growth celebrated about the industry? Despite the decades of existence, digital innovations are greatly responsible for the growth of the nolly wood industry (Giwa, 24). This response clearly indicates that a paradigm shift from analogous processes to the digitized ones altered the dynamics of this trend. The effect of innovative management is best exemplified in the Nollywood story which saw a market of decades of losses, transform into a vibrant market with customer/users preferences fulfilled while the investors are beginning to recoup their resources. Beauty of this exercise is that it is basically tech-driven which digitally bridges the gap between the product and sits users. The role of the internet in facilitating the quality and pace of movie production processes remains an incontrovertible fact because the ability to multitask at a very highly successful rate justifies why all units in the process must start working smartly (Mauryakufa and Pradhan, 816). The veracity of this claim is non-negotiable hence the reiteration of that filmmakers have been able to use these online network to develop, fund and circulate screen contents. By facilitating these kinds of activities, online networks did not just encourage smart work but also created newer models of doing businesses (Ebelebe, 17). This view summarily elucidates the fact that the paradigm shift from analogue to digital has enabled the evolution of a new market structure which focuses extensively on innovative management has altered how entertainment is designed and executed in Nigeria. The trend has moved from product-focused to a user-centred dynamic. From this view, one sees that the innovative management has significantly repositioned the Nollywood angle of entertainment in Nigeria in a positive manner.

This explains why the Nigerian film industry is almost running its box-office operations from an e-banking point of view whereby sales are online to individuals at their convenient times. The presence of Iroko tv, RokTv, etc testify to this growth.

### **Music**

The musical component is the most singular beneficiary of innovative management. The industry soared from a pirate – driven to an almost users-driven industry because of the strategic alignment of artists, their content and digitized market space. The gradual departure from an overtly pirated market to one fully readjusting to contemporary realities of digital music is a major proof of effects of innovative management. Music is now streamed and consumed on a larger scale online more than before, and consumers highly benefit from it. This paradigm shift did not happen immediately but has certainly hastened in the last few years (Ofochebe, 12) The effect of innovative management on the Nigerian music scene has dual nature. The duality of its nature stems from the fact that it solves an old problem of physical piracy while still creating or enabling a new type of piracy that is digitally inclined. This view despite highlighting an existing challenge does not negate the effect of innovative management on the industry. The emergence of streaming services and streaming platforms like Boomplay, Apple Music and Spotify has greatly impacted the music listening experience in Nigeria. Internet-based electronic commerce ensures better ways of music production, distribution, sales, purchase and almost instant reviews in a manner that ensures speedy and easier customer satisfaction in a manner that defies geographical boundaries (Wiafe, 12). The innovative management effect on the Nigerian Musical space is such that guarantees improved mode of operation and better customer experience but most importantly an almost decentralized mode of production. The foregoing is an undeniable evidence to improve that to the Nigerian Musical space despite some expected challenges, have witnessed its fair share of growth and readjustment owing to the evolution of innovative management in the sector. From recording, through editing down to sales, the innovative management factor has extricated the unnecessary monopoly that would have limited several people while enriching fewer richer key players in the industry.

### **Theatre**

The concept of innovative management in contemporary theatre practice in Nigeria can never be exhaustively discussed without a recourse to Hubert Ogunde who was the first documented innovative manager of the theatre profession. Initial efforts were from the experiences of the Yoruba Alarinjo theatre as supported by Oni (12). The tradition of the Alarinjo theatre experience eventually shaped the colonial experiences of commercial theatre under Hubert Ogunde who intentionally started making money through the scheme. Oni cited by Oni (13) strongly supports the fact that the emergence of newer forms of education partly led to the demise of the non-utilitarian type of Alarinjo theatre, a departure that started incorporating contemporary realities into the pattern of theatrical milieu. The quest to employ people and render unique entertainment packages distinguished this theatre tradition (Oni, 12). The success of these theatre managers prompted the emergence of newer generation of theatre managers whose exploits are to consolidate on the success stories of their predecessors. This explains why it is noteworthy that the performing arts in Nigeria has always thrived from a sole proprietorship point of view wherein they have the ease of innovations with minimal bureaucratic bottlenecks. These entrepreneurial approach has always been the reason for the ever increasing number of private or theatres in Nigeria (Afolabi and Oyewo, 6). This premise captures the efforts the entrepreneurial mindsets who are consciously on creating a new theatrical market. But the view fails to acknowledge the fact that several sole-proprietors in the theatre/performance business are not making any tangible remunerations from the box office and the allied sources of fund available to them in Nigeria.

### **Reviewing Innovative Management in Entertainment Production Processes**

All known components of entertainment are usually planned in three phases known as pre-production, production and post-production respectively. The pre-production entails planning, scripting and storyboarding, etc; the production involves the actual shooting/recording while post-production involves the phase that considers distribution, reviews, fan base interaction, etc. for purposes of precision, this study focuses more on one major component each from the three aforementioned phases in production processes. Therefore, the thematic interrogation of innovative management in the pre-production and aspect goes thus:

### **Auditioning**

Initially, the process of auditioning was an acutely physical exercise which could only be successfully done when the directing theme was available to the whole intending artists. This has been the practice for over a century. But recent happenings started showing the willingness of passionate professionals whose schedules often prevented from acting began to utilize the alternative auditioning options. People now hold auditioning online via any enabling platforms whereas others are auditioned by the pre-recorded video clips showing their attempt to enliven a scenario via adequate character analysis and role interpretation. Nowadays casting calls are visible on the internet to provide opportunities

to a wider variety of people...video call software also makes it easier for the production cast to rehearse or audition anywhere if they can't be on location (Baxter, 7). The effect of this view stems from the fact use of technology has greatly crashed the prices of hosting auditions for both the stage and screen performances in a seamless manner that achieves even greater success. It also assisted the directors in casting from a wider spectrum of artists whose geographical location could have impeded if it were a physical process of auditioning. The presence of several sites automatically ensures efficiency that the physical involvement of agents usually impedes in real life (Horwitz, 3). These views are all complimenting the effects of innovative management as it affects the auditioning as critical component of the pre-production phase. The vital question now is, are all the production teams innovative enough to accept such progressive ideas of internet-based audition or even direct video shots showing the artistry of the intending cast? The answer to this lies ahead to this study. The quest to improve on customer/customer preferences while reducing cost of production and simultaneously improving the ease of doing business justifies why the digital revolution manifested in the entertainment world mostly in the manner of swift access to all finished products streamed online in a manner that defies location and time boundaries (Leane, 2).

### **Acting**

Innovative management has one of its greatest success recorded in the field of acting. The conventional pattern of acting has been deposed by a new format which exists in a continuous realm not barred by any boundaries. This means that as this technology becomes more widely available, we would also expect to see smaller-budget productions starting to use these technological tricks. This implies that the way conventional acting was designed has been altered by the innovation adopted by different production firms. This encourages low budget films that focus on acting while limiting the interference of capital and distance (location). The growth of digital technologies heralded a new acting pattern that. Actors ceased to be tied to specific interval. They now use technology to simulate endless possibilities in terms of characters and scenarios that would have been impossible in the past (Rapp, 9). The truth about innovations on acting has several dimensions since the process entails a lot more in the technologically advanced contemporary society. The ease of operations introduced into the acting profession by these innovations can never be overemphasized. But the central challenge is how may entertainment producing brands can either afford the cost of the paradigm shift from analogous to digitally inclined acting and other activities? The ones that can afford it are already on course while those who cannot afford it are greatly retarded in all ramifications. It explains why this isn't the same for all theatre productions. Commercial theatres and larger institutions have the money to invest in technology and automation... smaller, usually government funded theatres simply don't have the funds to invest in technology (Baxter, 9). This now shows that in as much as the acting profession allows for flexible mode of operation on the part of the casts, it is a huge financial load for the upcoming or not-too financially balanced brands since vital innovations are financially demanding. Irrespective of this challenge that faces the acting profession, an actor's career has also shifted substantially. In terms of global trend, content creation used to be an exclusive right of those with the means in big cities. (Horwitz, 7). This phase is where most of the entertainment in Abuja are still trapped. They have not gone beyond the conventional production process that that has decentralized the process of acting profession in a commercialized manner. Innovative management was the singular factor that spurred most skit makers into the business that has projected their image whole fetching them fortune. This is because the growth of digital technology has greatly enabled endless actors and even non-actors alike to intentionally create quality contents disseminated online in a manner that defies location and social status.

### **Marketing/ Distribution**

The effect of innovation and the management process therein perfectly captures the present trend in entertainment content marketing/distribution. The process has seen an incontrovertible level of progress that transformed its mode of operation and the attendant results to a level unimagined from the onset. This is because digital transformation has caused upheaval and irreversible change to the creative industries and in some sectors, such as performing arts, it has enabled business to reach their audiences in new and exciting ways (Baxter, 7). The greatest breakthrough lies in the fact most audiences no longer need to worry about their locations in their quest to watch any content aimed at entertainment. Several other options of directly accessing films and other creative means of expression abound in this digital technology-driven age. People now access these media of expression in a speedier pattern at their own convenience (Rapp, 9). Beyond the issue of ticket sales, lies the audience connection factor. In the era of participatory consumer process being a major decider of the entire innovative process, audience connections have greatly influenced actor performances, sales and overall perception of the brand in the market. While exemplifying the place of innovations on audience participation via fan base activities, it enabled actors innovatively align with their casts.

Social media platforms have built very organic relationships between actors and their fan bases across the world which sustains even a post-performance relationship (Rapp, 10). The almost indispensable nature of innovative marketing of the arts via digital technology became more consolidated in the 2020 covid-19 pandemic that witnessed the global lockdown of diverse aspects of human endeavour (Leane, 6). The overall progress of the innovative marketing in the entertainment sector further consolidates the seemingly better narratives emanating from drastically reduced publicity pollution and physical piracy menace that characterized the initial conventional marketing menace of the analogous marketing era.

### **Contextualising innovative management in Mosaic Theatre Company**

To exhaustively discuss the effects of innovative marketing on all the Abuja-based entertainment production firms would entail a verbose exercise that would alter the scope of this study. Therefore, for the sake of precision, this study assesses the effects of innovative management on Mosaic Theatre company under the following headings:

- Vibrant partnerships
- Innovative marketing/sales
- Reduction in Expenditures
- Versatility
- Paradigm Shifts

#### **(i). Vibrant Partnerships:**

One of the most outstanding effects of innovative management of any firm is the ability to identify and engage in vibrant partnership deal with brands that share similar visions. This often grants outstanding results to such newly hybridized brands. This stems from the fact that the capital base alongside the research and development components of two or more brands combine to generate novel ideas that could have been difficult for a lone entity. The hybridised form of knowledge emanating from strategic partnerships often lead to cheaper and easier ways of achieving results in a manner that guarantees profit maximization in any business (Daar, 47). The huge resource-bases of such brands make them very formidable in the competitive market space. This premise birthed an actor training and film production brand called T.H.E. Film Academy (TFA). Besides, the partnership with PlayNetwork Studios has seriously aided the stage end screen exercises that the Mosaic Theatre Company has undertaken in recent years. In recent times, the Nigerian Customs Services just launched a movie titled *Beyond the Badge* that it partnered with the Mosaic Theatre Productions Company to produce. This is in conjunction with the several strategic developmental drama projects sponsored by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Goethe Institutes and several other foreign embassies and Diplomatic Corps in Nigeria.

#### **(ii). Innovative marketing/Sales**

The ability of a brand to depart from a product-centred approach to a customer-convenience-focused approach is a major indicator of that brand's intentional effort to align with the contemporary marketing ideals of this tech-driven age. This means that the marketing process of a brand has to be a product of extensive researches that is dynamically progressive hence the endless nature of modifications to the product and its sales process. Organizational changes that often lead to responsive growth is usually as a result of innovative marketing strategies. These often trigger healthy competition amongst other brands because the success stories of the brands that aligned with this approach is often too obvious to be ignored (Sattari and Mehrabi, 79). The contemporary process of entertainment marketing and sales best sums up foregoing perspective. Most of the blockbusters produced by PlayNetwork Studios had a strong marketing and sales processes from the Mosaic Theatre Productions Company. They aided in the process of digitally marketing these films via major online platforms like Netflix, Showmax and authentic Cinemas globally. This was the trend in *Living in Bondage Breaking Free, Rattlesnake, The Glamour Girls, Hijack 93 and Blood Vessels*. All these outstanding movies were innovatively marketed via digital platforms.

#### **(iii). Reduction in Expenditures**

The dream of every strategic business manager is to minimize cost while maximizing profits. The onus is on the innovative manager to adapt to the contemporary ideals that facilitate such with the view of increasing profits with the most minimal deployment of scarce resources. This explains why several brands keep adjusting and readjusting to new paradigms in an attempt to be intentionally frugal in its process of management. The digital revolution, fast-tracked by the internet, has globally reduced the time and cost of business management. This is more evident in the entertainment milieu where the new media has enabled farther heterogeneous coverage with almost unlimited options at minimal cost

to the brand owners. It is basically a management responsibility. The process of best practice cost reduction programs and the processes of executing such are often the exclusive responsibility of very experienced senior managers who outlines the timeline and operational review of the entire process through a digitally easy and multitasking approach (Deloitte, 3). The pattern of innovative approaches that is digitally inclined reduces the cost of running businesses for these brands. The launching of T.H.E. Film Academy facilitated auditioning processes of the Mosaic Theatre Productions. Since the year 2020 pandemic, several projects executed by the Mosaic Theatre Production Company has enjoyed subsidies emanating from the strategic partnership with several donor agencies. This has greatly reduced the financial responsibility of the firm while increasing the chances of its diversification into other artistic avenues for proper profit maximisation. The dividend of innovative management further manifests in the reduced presence of menacing paper posters for movie advertisements that littered all major Nigerian cities.

(iv). Versatility

Innovative management seeks to achieve versatility both in its approach to production and in the team undertaking such exercise. The potentials of an innovatively managed brand can never be overemphasized. This explains why there is a very high tendency of achieving several goals with finesse in diverse fields of endeavour. This explains why it appears that in contemporary times, most entertainment brands keep trying to excel in several genres of the arts. The experience is borne out of the need to remain relevant in a speedily changing world where variety supersedes monotony. The speedy paradigm changes that makes complex the entire processes of innovative management implies that sound leader must have to be intentionally versatile to comfortably handle such peculiar critical challenges as they arise (Kaiser, 139). In recent times, the success of a brand is largely determined by the versatility of its managers. The essence of this lies in the quick readjustment to changing paradigms or emerging ideals. If the management of entertainment brands are not versatile enough to easily readjust, they risk being labeled as old media. The management of Mosaic Theatre consistently combines movie and stage play productions alongside performance related consultancy respectively. There is a conscious effort to replicate the excellence acquired in one genre on the other. Within the past one year, the management of Mosaic Theatre Productions manifested this in the stage productions like *Lurk in the Dark* (2023 Abuja), *Sipping Coffee with my Boss* (Owerri 2024) and *Inside Out* (Abuja 2024). In the same interval, they churned out the following movies: *Blood Vessel* (2023), *Hijack 93* (2024) and *Beyond the Badge* (2024). These feats exclude myriads of developmental performances done inside selected internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

(v). Coordinating Paradigm Shifts

Innovative management enables speedy readjustments to emergencies that tend to alter the conventional dynamics of every system. This means that the versatility, technical and theoretical knowledge are deployed to sustain the brand in times of uncertainty especially one that threatens the existence of entertainment. Inability to adapt and take over the new ideals renders a brand redundant. The seemingly endless demands of consumer preferences imply that each production brand must arm itself with the requisite knowledge only obtainable by experience through being conversant with emerging and existing data to ascertain the periodic preferences of each set of consumers (Webb, 69). Mosaic Theatre spearheaded the first Drive-in Theatre experience in Nigeria during the pandemic era which radically threatened the existence of theatre. This made it adapt to the innovative pattern of packaging and presenting theatre performances to the percipients in times of unusual circumstances. The same quest justifies the T.H.E. Film Academy (TFA) adopted the mobile app that facilitated the pre-production process for the artists without recourse to physical geographical boundaries. The attached website explains the essence of the app. <https://thefilmacademy.net> All that an innovative manager needs to do is to identify and localize any contemporary paradigm that benefits his or her brand.

**Thematic table analysing the effects of innovative management on selected Mosaic Theatre Production Company.**

The innovative management ideals of the Mosaic Theatre Production brand are analysed thus:

THEMES	ADVANTAGES	REMARKS
(1). Strategically vibrant Partnership(s).	a). Increased Human resource base.  b). Easier access to funding	MT= “There is a steady supply of ideas, human and technical resources. All that we need to achieve success became easier since that merger.”  “The existence of a viable team facilitates the pace and process of fundraising for each new project. This makes the potentials of the brand almost limitless.”
(2). Innovative marketing	a). Increased Sales  b). Tracking Sales	MTP= “The use of internet-based platforms really increases sales of both stage plays and movies alike.” When compared to analogue era, the progress in sales is quite encouraging.” MTP= “The digital marketing approach aids precise tracking of ticket sales and online streaming for record purposes.”
(3). Reduction in Expenditures	a). Preference for Digitally projected sceneries  b). Facilitating the pace of Production process.	i). MT= “The choice of digitally projected sceneries prevents the monies spent on manual set and scene construction. Such resources are channeled into other useful purposes.” i). MT= “From the moment pre-recorded auditions became a pattern in show-biz, the resources spent on logistics for analogous physical auditioning process became savings left for other purposes.”
(4). Coordinating Paradigm Shifts	a). Experimenting with contemporarily appreciated themes	MTP= “The need to produce valuable entertainment in the Pandemic era necessitated the Drive-in theatre experience in Abuja at a time most brands didn’t see the possibility of a live stage performance. The decision to achieve that feat was informed by the global quest to sustain the entertainment process of that era.” PNS= “The increasing demand for virtual reality which covers up to 7 dimensional perspective explains why we launched the mobile game called <b>Aki and Paw-Paw</b> on the Playstore.

**Table 1:**Thematic tables analyzing the effects of innovative management and its benefits as obtained from the Key Informant Interview(KII).

From the above, it is obvious that the success achieved by the Mosaic Theatre Production team emanates from the quest to evolve in ideas and means of executing them considering that variety remains the spice of life and businesses. This is achieved through strategically vibrant partnerships, innovative marketing, reduced cost of production, versatility and coordination of paradigm shifts. The desired results manifest through the intentional quest of the leadership of Mosaic Theatre Production to keep assessing their creative output through factoring in innovations that facilitate the growth of entertainment sector through technical and human moderations that success.

### Conclusion

Having analysed the issues that necessitated this study, it concludes thus:

The leadership of Mosaic Theatre Productions Abuja deploys an Innovative management pattern to pilot its routine and periodic activities. Such management is the one that firstly considers the preferences of its ever growing customer base in policy formulation and execution processes. Therefore, their management is a product of extensive research which often focuses on the best ways to improve existing products or services.

Besides, the successful entertainment producing brands leverage on contemporary realities most championed by the internet revolution to create and market contents that align with the tastes of their teeming customers base. They understand that the best way to speedily reach a wider range of heterogeneous audience must be through digital market that enables endless periodic upgrades in a bid to satisfy the audience.

Finally, the Nigerian economy, being at one of its lowest moments in history, requires that a brand that is intentionally resilient will strategically diversify into other sources of revenue to avoid getting choked.

### Recommendations

The study recommends increased partnership as a vital way of building human and operational resource bases needed in effective production. The more the options for resources, the easier it will be on all parties involved while strengthening the product birthed by such experience.

Also, each entertainment outfit in Nigeria should strive to ensure a guaranteed level of digital/online alignment. This is in a bid to ensure that both sales and online presence through which audience preferences are ascertained is established on time. Since virtual market space records more sales in recent times

Finally, any entertainment brand that seeks to excel in modern times must be intentional about its preference of innovatively managed leadership. This stems from the fact that the leadership of any entertainment outfit that does not evolve with contemporary realities informed by the innovations across all spheres of endeavour is doomed to fail.

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