

The Family Menu

By Benson Idonije

The 10th anniversary of "Maggie Family Menu" was celebrated on NTA 10 on Friday August 10 with feasting, a parade of the latest in fashion, and speech making. A good number of guests was invited to feed sumptuously on a variety of mouth-watering and inviting delicacies set on the table. In between meals, guests showered praise and encomiums on a television programme that has sustained viewership for a decade.

Some qualitative, others like Mike Okri of "Omoge" fame praised the presenter for her choice of words. Some claimed that the programme has touched the lives of their wives, others said that it is the greatest programme on television. They all spoke their minds on the spur of the moment, a moment that was not quite convenient for the absolute truth.

There is no doubt that "Maggie Family Menu" has served a useful purpose as a utility programme, but while Nestle Foods is celebrating the joy of this anniversary, they should also occupy their minds with how to sustain another decade by introducing new ideas to make it more interesting, and to approach the production from a more creative and imaginative angle. There is room for improvement. A lot needs to be done, especially in the area of production.

The basic production area which needs to be addressed is the proper determination of the programme's target audience. This negligence is affecting the proper focus and alignment of the programme. This is the first step to take but in my opinion, something is wrong. The target audience has not been properly defined and as a result episodes tend to leave the viewer with a question mark, some vague memory of confusion, bordering on incredibility.

The menu at the kitchen on Friday, June 14, for instance, was "Osu Oka," a delicacy from Obowo area of Imo State. As usual, the presenter listed the recipe methodically and prepared the food. She then called a woman from Obowo, the origin of the menu to taste the food and tell her impressions. She shrugged her shoulders, as if in disapproval, and threw some light on the significance of the food and how to prepare it locally, back home. This action I saw as a nullification of the genuineness of the presenter's recipe an indictment on the credibility of the exercise. Some questions have arisen here for the producer. Who is the target audience? Is it the city dweller or the rural population? Is it a combination of both? The answers to these questions programme properly. The successful answers to these posers will definitely provide a good production guide for the future.