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## Nigerian email actually brings a windfall for Brisbane's PD Training



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Lagos has been an unlikely source of revenue for Brisbane-founded PD Training.

by **Michael Bailey**

When Paul Findlay, the co-founder of Brisbane's PD Training, started receiving business proposals from Lagos in early 2014, he did what many businesspeople would do after years of warnings about Nigerian email scams. He ignored them.

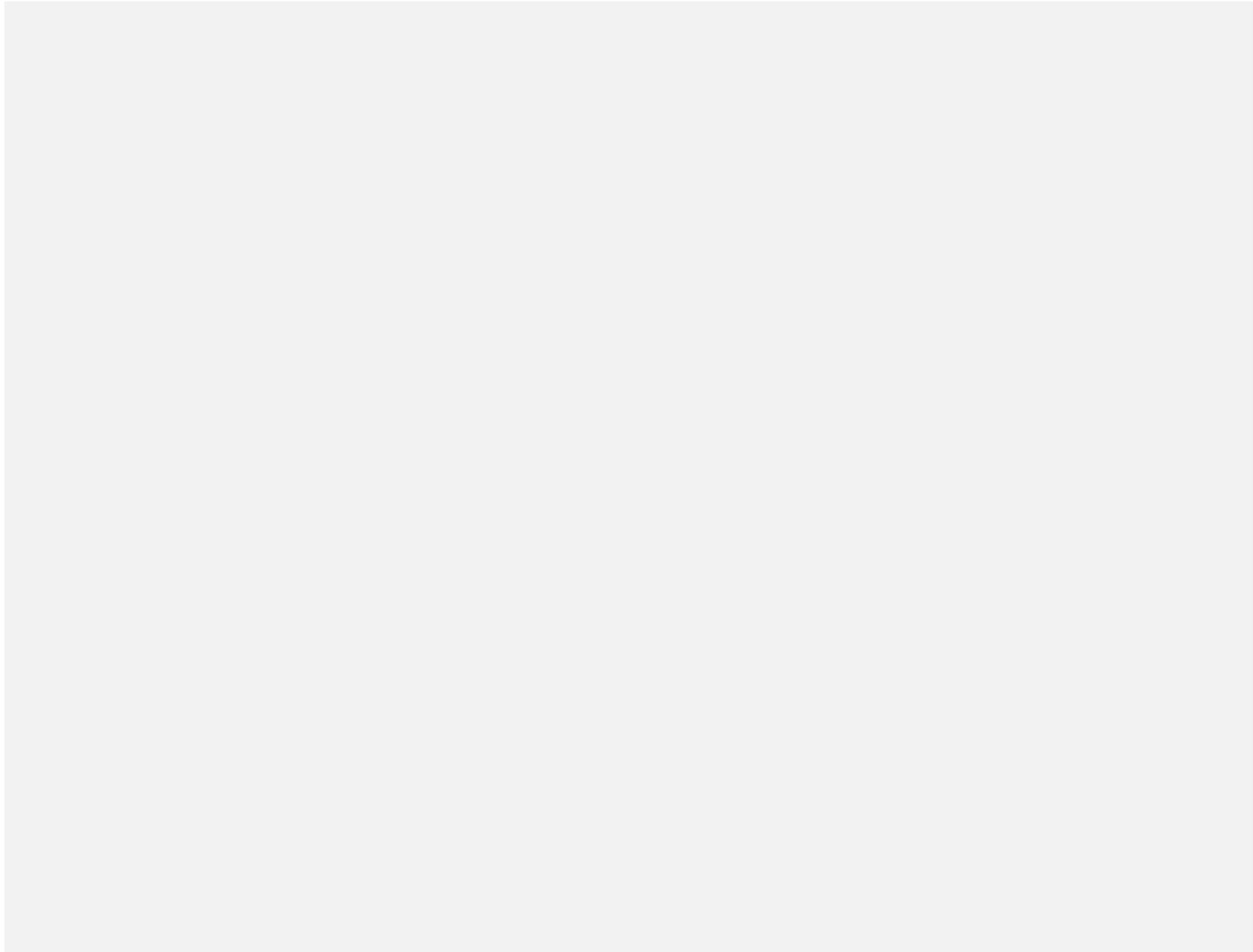
However, the requests for a conversation kept coming. The Nigerian correspondent ran a professional development training firm, Cedars & Oaks, that was popular with local businesses. However, it wanted to license an internationally known brand to service multinationals, many of which had their Nigerian base in the highrises surrounding Cedar & Oaks' headquarters in Ikoyi, on affluent Lagos Island. Findlay, already in eight countries outside Australia since launching with \$10,000 in 2009, finally decided there was enough sincerity behind the requests to set up a Skype meeting.

"Nigeria certainly wasn't part of the global footprint we saw for our brand, but these guys had pestered us for months. So I offered them terms that I thought were pretty silly – a 30 per cent share of the revenue from every course of ours they licensed. Amazingly, they agreed straight away."

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After a few more group calls on Skype, PD Training Nigeria was born in February 2015. It's the only territory where Findlay operates via a licensee rather than directly, and while he won't break out the Nigerian numbers, the venture has done well enough to contribute materially to PD Training's \$7 million revenue for 2014-15 (which represents 62 per cent average annual growth over the last three years and ranked it 62nd in [BRW's Fast 100 for 2015](#)).



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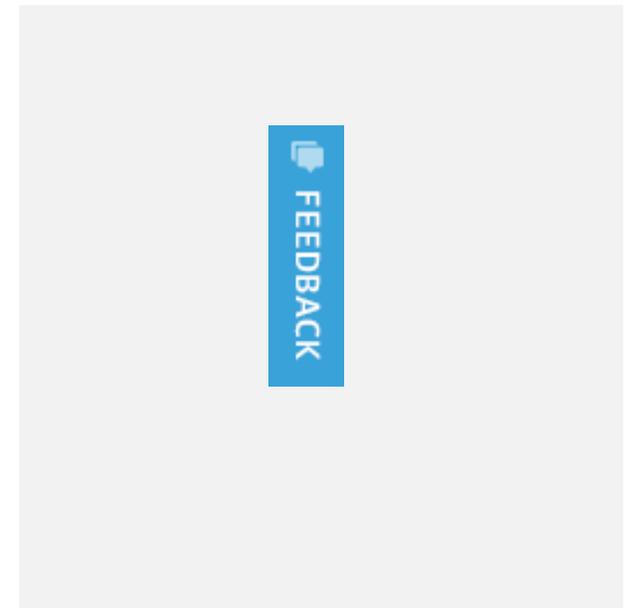
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PD Training co-founder Paul Findlay

"They've proven to be good operators," says Findlay, and urges fellow "born global" entrepreneurs not to dismiss Africa's largest economy out of hand.

"Compared to South Africa, where they're basically keeping us out with all these rules around having to be black-owned, Nigeria's been fine."

Nigeria's gross domestic product is over \$700 billion, yet in 2014 its exports to Australia were worth just \$1.6 billion – all crude petroleum, according to The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade.

Australia sent just \$219 million of goods the other way, most of it wheat.

However Findlay thinks services could become a meaningful export to Africa's burgeoning giant.

"Their language of business is English – something we always look for in a new territory – and they need training in active listening, managing difficult conversations and things like six-sigma techniques just as much as anyone else."

Apart from expanding to Nigeria, another notable achievement for PD Training in 2015 was to provide Microsoft Powerpoint tutorials – to Microsoft staff in Malaysia.

"I couldn't believe it when Microsoft Malaysia approached us to do that. Now Apple Asia wants us to teach Microsoft Excel to its staff, so I guess that's a wrap for Excel!"



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